



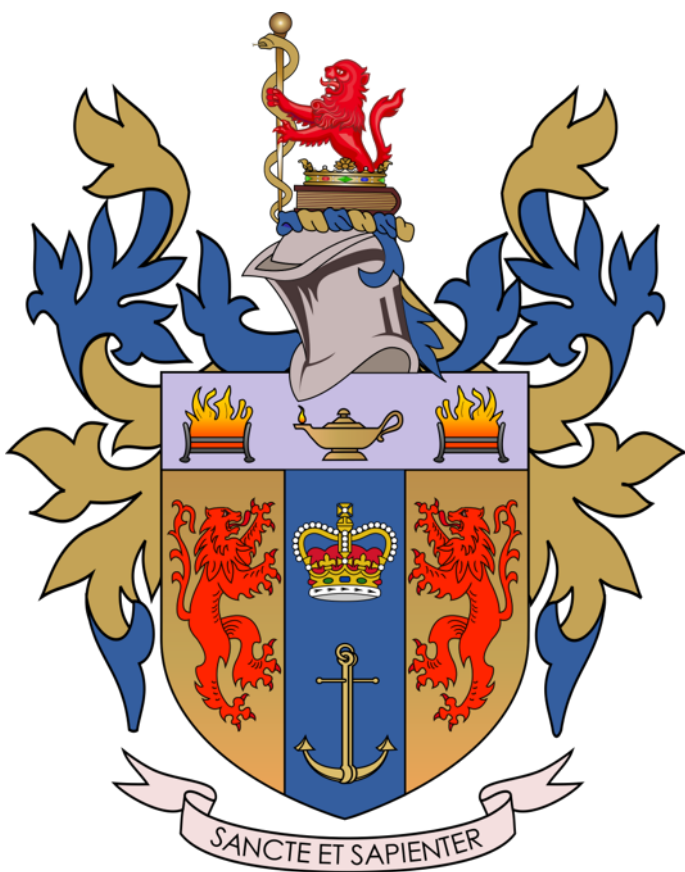
DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

MADAWI AL-RASHEED, CAROOL KERSTEN
AND MARAT SHTERIN (EDITORS)

In Western popular imagination, the caliphate often conjures up an array of negative images, while rallies organised in support of resurrecting the caliphate are treated with a mixture of apprehension and disdain, as if they were the first steps towards usurping democracy. These images and perceptions have little to do with reality. While some Muslims may be nostalgic for the caliphate, only very few today seek to make that dream come true. Yet the caliphate can be evoked as a powerful rallying call and a symbol that draws on an imagined past and longing for reproducing or emulating it as an ideal Islamic polity. The caliphate today is a contested concept among many actors in the Muslim world, Europe and beyond, the reinvention and imagining of which may appear puzzling to most of us.

Demystifying the Caliphate sheds light on both the historical debates following the demise of the last Ottoman Caliphate and controversies surrounding recent calls to resurrect it, transcending alarmist agendas to answer fundamental questions about why the memory of the caliphate lingers on among diverse Muslims. From London to the Caucasus, to Jakarta, Istanbul, and Baghdad, the contributors explore the concept of the caliphate and the re-imagining of the Muslim *umma* as a diverse multi-ethnic community.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE



KING'S
College
LONDON

MADAWI AL-RASHEED, CAROOL KERSTEN
and MARAT SHTERIN
(*editors*)

Demystifying the Caliphate

*Historical Memory and
Contemporary Contexts*

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Oxford University Press is a department of the
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Oxford New York

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Published in the United States of America by
Oxford University Press
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available
Al-Rasheed, Madawi; Kersten, Carool; Shterin, Marat
Demystifying the Caliphate
Historical Memory and Contemporary Contexts
ISBN 978-0-19-932795-9

Printed in India on acid-free paper

CONTENTS

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	vii
<i>Abbreviations</i>	ix
<i>Glossary</i>	xi
<i>Contributors</i>	xvii
Introduction: The Caliphate: Nostalgic Memory and Contemporary Visions	1
<i>Madawi Al-Rasheed, Carool Kersten and Marat Shterin</i>	
1. The Abolition of the Caliphate in Historical Context	31
<i>Basheer M. Nafi</i>	
2. South Asian Islam and the Idea of the Caliphate	57
<i>Muhammad Qasim Zaman</i>	
3. Who Speaks of What Caliphate?: The Indian <i>Khilafat</i> Movement and its Aftermath	81
<i>Jan-Peter Hartung</i>	
4. Mustafa Kemal's Abrogation of the Ottoman Caliphate and its Impact on the Indonesian Nationalist Movement	95
<i>Chiara Formichi</i>	
5. The Wahhabis and the Ottoman Caliphate: The Memory of Historical Antagonism	117
<i>Madawi Al-Rasheed</i>	
6. The Caliphate as Nostalgia: The Case of the Iraqi Muslim Brotherhood	135
<i>Fareed B. Sabri</i>	
7. The Caliphate in Contemporary Arab TV Culture	147
<i>Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen</i>	
8. <i>Khilafa</i> as the Viceregency of Humankind: Religion and State in the Thought of Nurcholish Madjid	165
<i>Carool Kersten</i>	

CONTENTS

9. Promoting the Caliphate on Campus: Debates and Advocacies of Hizbut Tahrir Student Activists in Indonesia	<i>Claudia Nef</i>	185
10. Adhering to Neo-Caliphatism: The Ideological Transformation of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan	<i>Emmanuel Karagiannis</i>	207
11. The Caliphate in the West: The Diaspora and the New Muslims	<i>Reza Pankhurst</i>	225
12. Caliphate in the Minds and Practices of Young Muslims in the Northern Caucasus	<i>Marat Shterin and Akhmet Yarlykapov</i>	247
<i>Bibliography</i>		273
<i>Index</i>		295

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This volume is indebted to a generous grant from the European Science Foundation and its humanities and social sciences committees. We are greatly appreciative of their support, especially the excellent comments of their referees, who focused our project and helped us to consider wider regions and contexts. Our thanks are extended to our contributors who found the time amidst busy academic schedules to attend the conference in November 2010, held at King's College, London. Basheer Nafi, who was not able to attend owing to unforeseen travel, was kind enough to send us his valuable contribution after the conference.

Like any event, conferences tend to draw on the efforts and dedication of many people. Moira Langston, administrator at the Department of Theology and Religious Studies, was always available to help and deal with logistical issues. PhD candidate Anabel Inge provided tremendous help with finalising our scientific report. Her attentiveness and meticulous note taking led to an accurate and memorable record that was much needed several months after the memory of conference debates and controversies faded. King's College research grant officers were exemplary in their commitment to our project and its administrative side.

Michael Dweyer of Hurst & Co. was supportive from the very beginning. His enthusiasm for the approach and topic was encouraging. We thank him for his early support and commitment, which were extremely reassuring especially at times when we questioned our project and its relevance to the politics of the contemporary world.

This project was conceived by three academics specialising in different parts of the world. It is the product of efforts that transcend disciplines, languages, ethnicities and regional specialisation. We came to this project

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

with a view to finding common threads in our knowledge of specific regions. Our discussions were fruitful and illuminating throughout the various stages of this project. Without the support of Carool Kersten and Marat Shterin, this book would not have seen the light.

Madawi Al-Rasheed

London 2011

ABBREVIATIONS

AAI	Asistensi Agama Islam (Assistance in Islamic Religion) (Indonesia)
AKP	Justice and Development Party (Turkey)
CUP	Committee of Union and Progress (Turkey)
DPD	Dewan Perwakilan Daerah (District Executive Committee) (Indonesia)
DPP	Dewan Pimpinan Pusat (Central Executive Committee) (Indonesia)
DPW	Dewan Pimpinan Wilayah (Provincial Executive Committee) (Indonesia)
DUMKB	Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Kabardino-Balkaria
GNA	Grand National Assembly (Turkey)
HMI	Association of Muslim Students (Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam) (Indonesia)
HMI-MPO	Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam-Majelis Penyelamat Organisasi (Indonesia)
HT	Hizb al-Tahrir
IAIN	Islamic State Institute, Syarif Hidayatullah (Indonesia)
ICKB	Islamic Centre of Kabardino-Balkaria
IIP	Iraqi Islamic Party
IJU	Islamic Jihad Union (Jama'at al-Jihad) (Uzbekistan)
IMU	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (Ozbekiston Islomiy Harakati)
IRP	Islamic Renaissance Party
IRPT	Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan (Hizbi Nahzati Islomii Tojikiston)

ABBREVIATIONS

KBJ	Kabardino-Balkarian Jamaat (North Caucasus)
KKA	Klub Kajian Agama (Indonesia)
KMII	Kongres Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia (Indonesian Islamic Student Congress)
MHTI	Muslimah Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia
MWL	Muslim World League
NU	Nahdlatul Ulama
OIC	Organization of the Islamic Conference
PRRI	Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia
SIMI	Student Islamic Movement of India
UKM	National University of Malaysia
UTO	United Tajik Opposition

GLOSSARY

(Words are in Arabic unless otherwise stated)

<i>'adl-i ijtima'i</i>	social justice
<i>'amal salih</i>	good deeds
<i>amir</i>	leader
<i>amir al-mu'minin</i>	leader of the believers/Commander of the Faithful
<i>amir-i shari'at</i> (Urdu)	pre-eminent leader (India)
<i>assabiya</i>	nationalism
<i>Atatürkçülük</i> (Turkish)	the reforms instituted in Turkey by Mustafa Kemal
<i>'azima</i>	hardship
<i>Başbakanlık Osmanlı</i>	Archives of the Ottoman Prime Minister's Office
<i>Arşivi</i> (Turkish)	
<i>bay'a</i>	oath of loyalty to a sovereign
<i>bid'a</i>	innovation
<i>dar al-Islam</i>	the territory subject to Islamic law
<i>daurah</i>	training programme
<i>da'wa</i> (Indonesian)	missionary movement; message
<i>dakwah</i>)	
<i>al-dawla al-othmaniyya</i>	the Ottoman state
<i>al-dawla al-turkiyya</i>	the Turkish state
<i>dhimmi</i>	member of a protected minority
<i>din</i>	religion
<i>din wa-dawla</i>	religion and state
<i>dönme</i> (Turkish)	crypto-Jew in the Ottoman empire
<i>duniawi</i> (Indonesian)	the secular
<i>fatwa</i>	individual legal opinion

GLOSSARY

<i>fitna</i>	strife; civil war
<i>fitra</i>	individual nature, inherent characteristics
<i>habl Allah</i>	the 'Rope of God'
<i>habl al-nas</i>	the 'Rope of Mankind'
<i>hadith</i>	tradition; report of the sayings of Muhammad or his Companions
<i>hajj</i>	pilgrimage
<i>hakimiyyat-i ilahiyya</i>	sovereignty belongs to God alone
<i>halaqah</i>	study circle
<i>hanif</i>	'primordial monotheist'
<i>haramayn sharifayn</i>	the holy places in the Hijaz
<i>harbiyya</i>	military college
<i>hokum</i>	governance
<i>hukumat-i ilahi</i> (Urdu)	a divine government
<i>hukumat-i islami</i> (Urdu)	an Islamic government
<i>hukum uchrawi</i> (Indonesian)	eschatological law
<i>ijma'</i>	consensus
<i>ijtihad</i>	the exercise of independent judgement in jurisprudence; a process of deduction
<i>'ilm</i>	knowledge
<i>imam</i>	religious leader holding political office
<i>imam al-Hind</i>	pre-eminent leader in India
<i>iman</i>	faith; belief in God
<i>imarat</i>	emirate
<i>imarat-i shar'iyya</i> (Urdu)	institution providing religious guidance to Muslim communities under non-Muslim rule
<i>istibdad</i>	tyranny, despotism
<i>istilamu al-hukm</i>	taking power
<i>jahiliyya</i>	pre-Islamic age of ignorance
<i>jama'at</i>	a group; community
<i>jamaat</i>	Islamic organization in the ex-Soviet republics
<i>jihad</i>	holy war
<i>jumhuriyyat-i ilahi</i> (urdu)	'theo-democracy'
<i>kadi</i> (Arabic <i>qadi</i>)	judge
<i>kafir</i>	unbeliever

GLOSSARY

<i>kehidupan duniawi</i> (Indonesian)	this-worldly existence
<i>kehidupan uchrawi</i> (Indonesian)	transcendental life
<i>kekhalifahan manusia</i> (Indonesian)	humankind's vicegerency of the earth
<i>kemajemukan</i> (Indonesian)	pluralism
<i>kemanusiaan</i> (Indonesian)	humanity; humanism; humanitarianism
<i>khilafa</i>	caliphate
<i>al-khilafa al-rashida</i>	632–61: the period of the first four caliphs
<i>al-khulafa al-rashidun</i>	the four Rightly Guided Caliphs
<i>khalifat Allah fi'l-ard</i>	God's vicegerent on earth
<i>khalifat rasul Allah</i>	successor of the Prophet of God
<i>khuriy ala al-hakim</i>	rebellion against Muslim political authority
<i>khutba</i>	Friday sermon
<i>kuffar</i>	unbelievers
<i>kufri</i>	blasphemy; unbelief
<i>lâle devri</i> (Turkish)	Tulip Period
<i>madhhabi 'amal</i>	religious act
<i>mahkama sharia</i>	<i>shari'a</i> court, North Caucasus
<i>malik</i>	king
<i>medressa</i>	Islamic school in Central Asia
<i>menduniawikan</i> (Indonesian)	temporalizing
<i>millet</i>	consultation of minorities in the Ottoman empire
<i>mithaq madina</i>	the 'Covenant of Medina'
<i>mufidh al-ruh wa al-hayat</i>	'giver of life and soul')
<i>mujaddid, pl.</i>	renewer
<i>mujaddidun</i>	
<i>mujahidin</i>	those who conduct <i>jihad</i>
<i>mukadhdhibun</i>	deniers of God's final revelation to mankind
<i>murid</i>	follower of a Sufi shaykh
<i>musalsal, pl. musalsalat</i>	TV serial
<i>mushrik</i>	associationist, polytheist
<i>al-mustabidd</i>	the enlightened despot
<i>al-mustanir</i>	

GLOSSARY

<i>mu'tamad</i>	trusted
<i>muwahidun</i>	monotheists
<i>nahda</i>	renaissance
<i>nizam-i zindagi</i> (Urdu)	system of life
<i>nusrah</i>	material help
<i>pembaruan</i> (Indonesian)	renewal
<i>pembaruan pemikiran Islam</i> (Indonesian)	renewal of Islamic thinking
<i>penghijauan</i> (Indonesian)	'greening'
<i>peradaban</i> (Indonesian)	civilization
<i>pesantren</i> or <i>pondok</i> (Indonesian)	traditional Islamic boarding-school in Muslim South-East Asia
<i>piagam Madinah</i> (Indonesian)	analytical reasoning Madinah Charter
<i>qiyas</i>	
<i>rihla</i>	journey in search of learning
<i>rukhsa</i>	permissibility
<i>shahfat al-madina</i> (Indonesian) <i>Shahifat Madinah; Piagam Madinah</i>]	the 'Constitution of Medina'
<i>salaf</i>	ancestors, predecessors: the first Muslims
<i>seorang tokoh pembaru</i> (Indonesian)	renewer
<i>shari'a</i>	Islamic law
<i>shaykh al-islam</i>	chief cleric of the Ottoman empire
<i>shirk</i>	associationism; polytheism
<i>shura</i>	consultation; consultative council
<i>sira dhatiyya</i>	a personal biography <i>al-sultan al-a'zam</i> — supreme sultan
<i>sumpah mahasiswa</i> (Indonesian)	students' pledge
<i>sunna</i>	the words and deeds of the Prophet
<i>svarāj</i> (Urdu)	independence

GLOSSARY

<i>tafa'ul</i>	'interaction'
<i>tajdid</i>	renewal
<i>takfir</i>	labelling other Muslims as heretics
<i>takiyya</i>	Sufi lodge or mausoleum
<i>tanwir</i>	enlightenment
<i>taqlid</i>	an uncritical dependence on tradition or previous judicial opinions
<i>taqwa</i>	piety, 'God-consciousness'
<i>tarbiyah</i>	Muslim Brotherhood concept promoted in Indonesia
<i>tariqa</i>	in Northern Caucasus <i>tariqat</i> : Sufi order
<i>tasbih</i>	a ritual praising of God; set of beads to be turned while saying the <i>tasbih</i>
<i>tatspif</i> (Indonesian)	'culturing'
<i>tawba</i>	repentance
<i>tawhid</i>	monotheism, the oneness of God
<i>'ulama</i>	religious scholars
<i>umma</i>	the Muslim community
<i>usra</i>	cell of the Muslim Brotherhood in Iraq
<i>usul</i>	root, basis
<i>Vreemde Oosterlingen</i> (Dutch)	'Foreign Orientals'
<i>wali</i>	ruler, governor
<i>wali al-amr</i>	the ruler
<i>wazir</i>	prime minister
<i>wilaya</i> (Turkish <i>vilayet</i>)	province
<i>zakat</i>	the giving of alms; alms-tax
<i>ziyara</i>	sites of pilgrimage

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INTRODUCTION

THE CALIPHATE: NOSTALGIC MEMORY AND CONTEMPORARY VISIONS

Madawi Al-Rasheed, Carool Kersten and Marat Shterin

THE CALIPHATE AS HISTORY, CONCEPT, AND VISION

Demystifying the Caliphate brings together historians and social scientists who attempt to make sense of the contemporary debates about the caliphate among Muslims in different parts of the world. Historically, the Islamic caliphate was a polity that developed into a multi-ethnic transnational empire in which the bonds of faith and the rule of *shari'a* constituted the basis for centralized government. Previous caliphates ruled over parts—but not all—of the Muslim world between the seventh and twentieth centuries, and its last manifestation, the Ottoman caliphate, was abolished in 1924.¹ However, the concept and vision of the caliphate have outlived the historical polity, and today it generates heated debates more than any other Islamic concept. While the majority of ordinary Muslims retain a vague memory of the several polities in which their ancestors once lived, and may maintain a nostalgic attitude towards this past, a small but growing minority of fringe contemporary political activists openly call for the return of the

¹ On the various Islamic caliphates among Arab Muslims see Philip Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 10th edn, London: Macmillan, 1970.

caliphate as the ideal Islamic state. According to these activists such calls are central to political programmes and the renaissance of Muslims. In contemporary contexts, perhaps Hizb al-Tahrir (also spelled Hizbut Tahrir (Indonesia) and Hizb ut-Tahrir (Uzbek)), which since the 1950s has openly called for the resurrection of the caliphate, is the most prominent—but by no means the only—example of this revival.² On the most extreme side, al-Qaeda has mobilized its followers around the slogan of grouping Muslims under an Islamic caliphate.³

Thus, beyond its historical reality, for some contemporary Muslims the caliphate is a concept that is used for a variety of purposes and with diverse consequences, and also a vision of an ideal Islamic polity within which their grievances would be resolved and aspirations fulfilled. Some—predominantly young—Muslims find in the calls for the caliphate a discourse of empowerment. Some ideologues regard the caliphate as an Islamic duty and call upon Muslims to strive towards its establishment. On certain occasions Muslims respond by joining rallies, conferences and demonstrations in support of the call, while a small minority of intellectuals, preachers and activists theorize the centrality of the caliphate as a religious duty in pamphlets and booklets, and more recently on vivid web pages.⁴ The caliphate as an ideological tool for activist mobilization tends to combine religious discourse with political aspirations, creating in the process powerful emotional and moral commitments as well as legal responsibilities. This volume aims to revisit the complexity and diversity of this recent revival that has generated a variety of ideologies and contemporary movements in different parts of the globe, often moved by historical nostalgia but grounded in the present.

It seems important to clarify the ways in which the notion of the caliphate has been used in Islamic tradition. In the conceptual sense it is a reference to the Islamic state, a mode of government that has come to mean the application of *shari'a* (Islamic law) within a specific country. This concept has come to dominate the thinking and mobilization of all Islamist

² Perhaps Suha Taji Farooqi is still the best source on Hizb al-Tahrir. See *A Fundamental Quest: Hizb al-Tahrir and the Search for the Islamic Caliphate*, London: Grey Seal, 1996.

³ On the statements of al-Qaeda see Bruce Lawrence (ed.), *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama Bin Laden*, trans. James Howarth, London: Verso, 2005.

⁴ In English, several websites promote the caliphate; the most articulate one is www.khilafah.com.

INTRODUCTION

movements from the Arab world to the Far East. Mainstream Islamists demand this state as an alternative to the secular nationalist post-colonial polities that have sprung up across the Muslim world. Crucial to this state is *shari'a*, seen as the sole source of legislation. Most Islamists are content with seeing this law upheld within their own national borders. They accept elected representative councils that may issue legislation that does not contradict Islamic law. While they may develop transnational connections and networks, they hardly challenge existing nation-state borders. Such Islamists are often referred to as national Islamists, for example the Muslim Brotherhood branches across the Muslim world. It is unusual for these Islamists to invoke the caliphate as a historic polity in their discourse and political speeches, although they may endorse it as a long-term political project.

The term 'caliphate' is also used to refer to a pan-Islamic polity consisting of smaller states. In this sense it can have both conceptual meaning as a universal, supra-national Islamic polity and a reference to history, to previous Islamic empires in which multiple ethnic and linguistic groups, in addition to non-Muslims, lived under the authority of a Muslim caliph. Furthermore, we should distinguish between history as based on historical sources and a historical memory that conjures up images of powerful and righteous caliphs ruling over a prosperous and culturally superior Islamic world. Although this old imagery can be supported by selective historical references, in reality the caliph's rule was often challenged by ambitious governors aspiring for autonomy independent of central authority.

However, the memory of the caliphate as the bastion of pan-Islamic aspirations remains anchored in utopian visions about power, unity, glory and uniformity. The existing pan-Islamic institutions, such as the Muslim World League and the Council of Muslim Ulama, are too marginal to be able to foster the sense of strength that the caliphate as a polity is envisaged as bringing about. For the proponents of pan-Islamic unity these institutions are arms of existing nation-states with their own agendas that constantly fail to form a united front, especially with respect to non-Muslim states. This view is based on a strong belief that divisions are signs of weakness that allow individual national interests to undermine the unity of Muslims. In this sense the caliphate is a vision that reflects this deep quest for an imagined unity of all Muslims under one flag. The corollary of this vision of the caliphate is the notion of a universal Muslim *umma* where the bonds of faith override any other tribal, ethnic, linguistic, or civic identity.

Fraser sums up the meaning of the caliphate as a conception, an object of contestation and political institution, a rallying-point, a mode of dif-

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

ferentiation and a strategic goal.⁵ In theory, such a caliphate can encompass the whole of the Muslim world, which consists of local provinces, known as *wilayat*, administered by governors who swear allegiance to the supreme caliph, pay him religious tax, and respond to his call for *jihad* when this is necessary.

The great publicity that the contemporary calls to resurrect the caliphate often receive does not always reflect the complexity of responses to these calls among Muslims; nor does it capture the diversity of their reactions immediately after the demise of the Ottoman empire. Notwithstanding contemporary enthusiasm for the caliphate among enclaves of Muslims worldwide, serious calls for its revival in the twentieth century had mixed reception and success. We can identify regional differences between the Arab world, with its 300 million Muslims, South-East Asia, where the majority of the Muslim populations live, the former Soviet republics of Central Asia and Northern Caucasus, and Muslims in Europe.

In response to the scattered advocacy for resurrecting the caliphate, many policymakers, politicians, journalists and think-tank consultants both in the West and in the Muslim world tend to express alarm whenever the caliphate is evoked or adopted as a slogan for mobilization. In 2005 the then British Prime Minister Tony Blair warned that ‘extremists demand ... the establishment of effective Taliban states and sharia law in the Arab world en route to one Caliphate of Muslim nations’.⁶ American President George W. Bush mentioned the word ‘caliphate’ more than fifteen times in 2006.⁷ Sceptical commentators depict recent calls for the caliphate as a fantasy revealing a deep crisis within Sunni Islam.⁸ Abdul Wahid, director of Hizb al-Tahrir in London, replied to this scepticism in 2008: ‘This year there were open public conferences in Lebanon, Yemen, Sudan, Indonesia, Ukraine, Palestine, most significantly Indonesia where 100,000 people packed a Jakarta stadium debating and discussing the subject of the Caliphate as a system of government.’⁹

⁵ Ken Fraser, ‘The Islamic Caliphate and International Sociological Ontology’, discussion paper presented to the International Political Sociology reading group, Exeter University, 2010.

⁶ Reza Pankhurst, ‘The Caliphate, and the Changing Strategy of the Public Statements of al-Qaeda’s Leaders’, *Political Theology*, 4, 11 (2010), 530–52.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Jean-Pierre Filiu, ‘Ghosts of the Caliphate’, *Prospect* magazine, issue 140, November 2007; Asim Siddiqui, ‘Who needs a Caliphate’, *The Guardian*, 28 February 2008.

⁹ Abdul Wahid, ‘Living with the Caliphate’, *Prospect* magazine, issue 142, January 2008.

INTRODUCTION

In the West and in Muslim mass media and political establishments, such open conferences in support of resurrecting the caliphate, often attracting substantial crowds, are usually treated with a mixture of apprehension and disdain, as first steps towards overthrowing democracy, returning to oriental despotism, reinventing medieval divine rule, or establishing a totalitarian Muslim empire. Indeed, in Western popular imagination the caliphate often conjures up images of beheading, stoning, and discrimination against women and non-Muslim minorities, which are grafted onto the portrayals of Taliban practices and propaganda. However, these images and perceptions have very little to do with reality. While some Muslims may retain the nostalgic memory of the caliphate, only very few are currently working on making the dream come true. Moreover, these images ignore the fact that a substantial number of Muslims are loath to see the flag of a caliphate raised in Muslim capitals, even though some of them may long for the application of *shari'a* in their countries. With very few exceptions, neither historically nor in the contemporary period do we come across a uniform endorsement of the caliphate as a faith-based political project, or a unified effort to resurrect it, shared by all Muslims.

From London to Moscow, Jakarta, Istanbul, and Baghdad the concept of the caliphate may be theorized by a handful of religious scholars, invigorated by political activists, and condemned by other Muslims. Yet the caliphate is retained as a powerful slogan, image, and symbol that draws on an imagined past and a longing to reproduce it. While a few Muslims insist on its centrality to Islam, many have not only rejected it but contributed to its historical downfall. With globalization and the reimagining of the Muslim *umma* as a multi-ethnic diverse community, the caliphate is today a contested concept among many actors in the Muslim world, Europe, and beyond. As many Muslims had known the rise and fall of several caliphates, and others had never experienced any, the reinvention and imagining of the caliphate in the present may appear puzzling, in particular given what followed the demise of the last period of caliphate rule in Istanbul. This volume aims to shed light on both the historical debates following the demise of the last Ottoman caliphate and contemporary controversies surrounding recent calls to resurrect the caliphate.

THE CALIPHATE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

What is striking about the contemporary mobilization around the revival of the caliphate is its half-hearted reception in the historical Arab heartland of

the Muslim world—particularly among secularists, modernists, nationalists, and even religious scholars. In 1925, a year after the Ottoman caliphate was abolished, ‘Ali ‘Abd al-Raziq (1888–1966), an Egyptian Azharite scholar, published an important book in which he argued that the caliphate is not a religious obligation, and concluded that it ‘was only ever, and still remains, a calamity upon Islam and Muslims’.¹⁰ Arguing from within the Muslim tradition, ‘Abd al-Raziq considered the caliphate as an unnecessary institution in Islam. His book was immediately censured and the Council of Grand Ulama withdrew his religious qualifications.¹¹ Perhaps this was an indication that many religious scholars still cherished the idea of the caliphate in the wake of its disappearance, which was interpreted by many as marking the fragmentation of Muslims and the partition of their homelands.

But away from the intellectual battles in Egypt over ‘Abd al-Raziq’s daring approach to the caliphate, a real struggle for the legacy of the vanishing Ottoman empire had started as early as 1916. In what is now Saudi Arabia, where the first Islamic state of the Prophet Muhammad (570–632) was founded in Medina and four caliphs created the first model of the Islamic caliphate, *al-khilafa al-rashida* (632–61), and in Damascus, Baghdad, and Cairo, the later seats of Umayyad (seventh–eighth centuries), ‘Abbasid (eighth–ninth centuries), and Fatimid (tenth–twelfth centuries) caliphates, revival calls have failed to make an impression on the majority of contemporary Muslims. Early in the twentieth century two Muslim leaders, one claiming direct descent from the Prophet and ruling over the Hijaz in what became Saudi Arabia, aspired to create an Arab caliphate incorporating the Arab territories of the Ottoman empire. From Mecca Sharif Husayn (1854–1931) declared himself king of the Arabs in 1916 and assisted the British in defeating the last Islamic caliphate, the Ottoman empire, during the First World War.¹² He lost his throne to a rival power in Arabia in 1925, but his two sons, Faysal and Abdullah, had earlier been rewarded with the thrones of Iraq and Transjordan (contemporary Jordan). Both sons assumed the title

¹⁰ Ali Abdul Raziq, ‘al-Islam wa usul al-hukm’, in Muhammad Amara (ed.), *al-Islam wa usul al-hukm*, Beirut: al-Muasasa al-Arabiyya lil Dirasat wa al-Nashr, 1972.

¹¹ Reza Pankhurst, ‘Muslim Contestations over Religion and the State in the Middle East’, *Political Theology*, 11, 6 (2011), 826–45.

¹² Joshua Teitelbaum, ‘Sharyf Husayn ibn Ali and the Hashemite Vision of the Post-Ottoman Order: From Chieftaincy to Suzerainty’, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 34, 1 (1998), 103–22; Joshua Teitelbaum, *The Rise and Fall of the Hashemite Kingdom of Arabia*, London: C. Hurst & Co., 2001.

INTRODUCTION

of king rather than caliph. Sharif Husayn's dream of reviving an Arab caliphate was shattered, as the British and French political design for the region was partition rather than unification. Sharif Husayn's Arab revolt in 1916 and his short-lived dream are dramatized in the famous Hollywood film *Lawrence of Arabia*.¹³

Sharif Husayn's rival in Arabia, 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Sa'ud (Ibn Sa'ud) (1876–1953), also entertained dreams about leading all Arabs after their liberation from Ottoman rule, but he too failed to achieve his objectives, and his emerging state remained within the borders drawn by the British imperial power at the time. Similarly, Ibn Sa'ud adopted the title of king.¹⁴ Both Sharif Husayn of Mecca and Ibn Sa'ud assisted in the demise of the last Islamic Ottoman caliphate without being able to secure their own grand designs of ruling over the Arabs. Today, contemporary Islamist movements such as Hizb al-Tahrir struggle to compete with indigenous Salafi groups in countries such as Saudi Arabia, without being able to secure a solid base.¹⁵ Except for jihadis, Saudi Salafis seem to not only accept kingship within one state but defend it, relying on their own interpretations of religious texts. Their main concern has been with the purity of faith, the application of *shari'a*, and obedience to rulers. They have not advocated the return of the caliphate, although they think that their present monarchy is modelled on the rule of a previous generation of Muslim caliphs.

In Istanbul, the seat of the last Islamic caliphate, which ruled over a diverse Muslim empire incorporating territories in Europe and the Middle East, the Turkish Grand National Assembly abolished the Ottoman caliphate in 1924 and replaced it with a secular Turkish republic, hostile to any call for Islamic governance and aspiring towards a break with more than 500 years of Islamic history during which sultans in Istanbul were revered during Friday prayers in mosques across vast territories in Europe and Asia Minor. By the time the Turkish Republic was established the caliphate appeared to be a thing of the past, replaced by a nation-state whose borders were centred on the Turkish core of the empire. But the dream of the return of the caliphate may have lingered. Turkey's recent regional ambitions under the lead-

¹³ For a critical evaluation of this film see Steven Caton, *Lawrence of Arabia: A Film's Anthropology*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999.

¹⁴ Madawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, 2nd edn, Cambridge University Press, 2010.

¹⁵ Madawi Al-Rasheed, *Contesting the Saudi State: Islamic Voices from a New Generation*, Cambridge University Press, 2007.

ership of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), which has been in power since 2002, are sometimes seen as an attempt to revive a kind of neo-Ottomanism over its neighbours; that term is often used to refer to Turkey's alleged new imperial ambitions using its own soft power.¹⁶ The current Turkish government undoubtedly cherishes its own national borders; it has become an ambitious regional political, and economic power, inspiring admiration among its Arab neighbours, other Muslims, and even in the West, but there is no evidence of Turkey's intention to revive the caliphate.

In Jerusalem, the second most important religious centre for Muslims worldwide, where the Palestinian founder of Hizb al-Tahrir, Taqi al-Din al-Nabhani, made his first call for the return of the caliphate four years after the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, Arab audiences remained imperious to such a call. In this context resurrecting the caliphate is definitely tied up with Palestinian aspirations to establish their own homeland. Hizb al-Tahrir was immediately banned in Jordan and other Arab countries. In the region this movement has fewer followers than other Islamist organizations such as the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, in whose ideology the caliphate is not openly invoked or made a central mobilizing slogan, although it remains as a source of nostalgia to be pursued but not entirely reproduced within the borders of the contemporary state.¹⁷ Rather than Hizb al-Tahrir being relevant to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Hamas, an affiliate of the Muslim Brotherhood, dominates the Islamist field in Gaza. The Muslim Brotherhood and its transnational branches across the Muslim world and Europe have remained silent on reviving the caliphate, especially in places where it has won parliamentary seats, such as Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, and the Palestinian Territories. In Egypt, where the Muslim Brotherhood was founded in 1927, concern with British occupation overrode other desires to establish an overarching caliphate after 1924. The party coexisted with the Egyptian monarchy until the latter was overthrown in 1952. Its spokesmen and ideologues, especially Sayyid Qutb, denounced the Egyptian republic as a form of *jahiliyya* (an age of ignorance), but this did not amount to a call for the resurrection of the caliphate. In the aftermath of the 2011 Egyptian revolution the Muslim Brotherhood did not invoke the caliphate as an alternative to the vanishing Mubarak regime.

¹⁶ 'Turkey's Election Sparks Fears of Islamic Caliphate', CBN News, June 2011.

¹⁷ On the early foundation of the Muslim Brotherhood see Richard Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brotherhood*, Oxford University Press, 1969.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the twentieth century calls for the re-establishment of the caliphate threatened the newly created post-colonial states of the Arab world and the political leaders who assumed power in various capitals from Riyadh and Cairo to Damascus, Amman, and Baghdad. Such cities were conceived as capitals of new nation-states. Today the borders of these states remain, and no serious political movement or mobilization has emerged to challenge them with a view to merging them into a caliphate. Even at the height of Arab nationalism and timid attempts at unification in the 1960s, countries resisted mergers and definitely fought any political call for the revival of the caliphate, by its nature a negation of the old colonial master plan and a yearning for the *status quo ante*. Hence the lonely voice of Hizb al-Tahrir failed to resonate among people and the party was banned from the 1950s. Its followers continue to be brutally suppressed until the present day.

INDIA AND SOUTH-EAST ASIA: ISLAM AND POST-COLONIALISM

In contrast to the Arab world, Muslim regions in India and South-East Asia, where Muslims are more numerous than their Arab counterparts, we find that calls for the establishment of the caliphate were more profound. It was in the Indian subcontinent under British rule that an important movement calling for the revival of the caliphate emerged immediately after the abolition of the Ottoman caliphate. As Peter-Jan Hartung's discussion of the Khilafat Movement shows, restoration of an Islamic political entity gained a very substantial following among Islamic political activists in British India and played an important role in mobilizing Muslims for the struggle towards independence.

Indeed, given the geographical distance, the historical caliphate has played a rather subordinated role in Indo-Muslim history, and has predominantly come into play only when a new political power began to establish itself and was craving legitimacy. Thus, at least some of the various rulers, mainly Turkic and Afghan, of the so-called Delhi sultanate between 1206 and 1526 sought investiture from the 'Abbasid caliph, even after he faded into the shadows of Mamluk-ruled Cairo.¹⁸ By the advent of the Mughals in early sixteenth-century India the historical caliphate had lost what little

¹⁸ Otto Spies, 'Ein Investiturschreiben des abbasidischen Kalifen in Kairo an einen indischen Koenig', in S.M. Abdullah (ed.), *Professor Muḥammad Shafī' Presentation Volume*, Lahore: The Panjab University Press, 1955, 241–53.

political significance it had maintained, and had given way to other strategies to legitimize political rule. Although the term 'caliph' was frequently used in honorific appellations of the monarch, its initially religio-political meaning had shrunk by the fourteenth century to little more than 'supreme sultan' (*al-sultan al-a'zam*).¹⁹ As such the term was widely used not only throughout the subcontinent, but throughout the Persianate world and even beyond.

Things began to change when the Mughal empire started to disintegrate in the eighteenth century and former vassals attempted to establish independent political rule. Perhaps the most prominent case in this regard is that of Tipu Sultan of Mysore (killed 1799), son of a former mercenary in the service of the Mughal vice-regent in the Deccan. Although the circumstances are not yet entirely clear, pending a thorough investigation of the documents kept in the Archives of the Ottoman Prime Minister's Office (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi) in Istanbul, in 1785 Tipu had an embassy dispatched to the Sublime Porte.²⁰ In his missive to Sultan Abdülhamid I (d. 1789), in which he requested permission to set up a number of factories in the Ottoman lands, Tipu addressed the ruler clearly with caliphal appellations,²¹ thus showing an awareness of the continuation of the historical caliphate by the Ottomans. The fact that, at the same time, Tipu confronted his *de facto* Mughal overlord in an overtly confident way has led many scholars to speculate that Tipu had in fact sought investiture by the Ottoman Sultan,²² thus returning to the earlier practice of South Asian Muslim rulers of seeking refuge under the suzerainty of a supreme Muslim ruler of any form.

Also in the eighteenth century, Muslim scholars in the subcontinent responded to the disintegration of Mughal rule by beginning to reflect theoretically on the functions of a ruler towards his Muslim subjects. First and foremost among them was Shah Wali Allah Dihlawi (d. 1762), who

¹⁹ Abū 'l-Faql Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'arab*, 20 vols., Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Kubrā al-Miriyya, 1300–7 AH, vol. X, p. 431.

²⁰ Kh'ājah 'Abd al-Qādir, *Vaqā'i-i manāzil-i rūm*, ed. Muḥibb al-Ḥasan, Bombay *et al.*: Asia Publishing House, 1968.

²¹ Hikmet Bayur, 'Maysor Sultanı Tipu ile Osmanlı Padişahlarından I. Abdülhamid ve III. Selim Arasındaki Mektuplaşma', *Belleten—Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları*, 12, 47 (1948), 617–54.

²² For example, I.H. Qureshi, 'The Purpose of Tipu Sultan's Embassy to Constantinople', *Journal of Indian History*, 24 (1945), 77–84.

INTRODUCTION

considered the legal requirements for the righteous ruler's obligation to lead the community from a religious standpoint. If the ruler—as *imam*—is unable to provide contextualized rulings derived from his timely interpretation of the authoritative sources of Islam then he may be replaced by someone capable. As Zaman shows in his contribution, it was exactly this rather jurisprudential view that prompted Muslim theorists in later colonial India to either look for a qualified substitute in guiding the community, thus disentangling the religious from the political, or bid farewell to the historical notion of the caliphate in the succession to the Prophet and return to the Qur'anic notion of man's deputyship of God on earth. As a result of such considerations, institutions such as the *imarat-i shar'iyya* in the Bihari town of Phulwari-yi Sharif emerged, with the aim of providing sound religious guidance to the Muslim communities in the subcontinent under non-Muslim rule, thus substituting for the religio-political office of the caliph.

For those more politically inclined Muslims in India under colonial rule the Ottoman caliph remained a very useful point of reference, especially after the intensified efforts of the Ottoman sultans from the late eighteenth century to gain the widest possible recognition as caliphs.²³ For those who joined together in the Khilafat Movement of 1919–24, the first mass movement for Indian independence from British colonial rule, the endangered Ottoman caliphate served well as a symbol worth preserving, under whose banner Muslims of various backgrounds could unite for political action. However, not only did the fact that the British had begun to seriously pressurize the Ottoman caliph provide religious justification to act against the British in India, it was also acknowledged by learned Muslim leaders of the movement that from a legal perspective the caliph as suzerain of all Muslims was needed to religiously legitimize the waging of *jihad* against the enemies of Islam, who, in this case, were clearly the British colonial authorities.

It was with the abolition of the caliphate in 1924, which coincided with the collapse of the Khilafat Movement, that the historical caliphate lost importance for Indian Muslims. While a few former leaders of the movement subscribed to various of the almost exclusively Arab initiatives to re-establish a caliphate of some kind, the majority of them seem to have forsaken this idea and subscribed to the idea of creating a new consensus

²³ Martin Kramer, *Islam Assembled: The Advent of the Muslim Congresses*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1986, pp. 4–9.

(*ijma'*) within the global Muslim *umma*, the most common instruments of which were, and remain, Muslim congresses under various auspices.²⁴

With three contributions focusing on Indonesia, it is important to highlight the significance of this country in the modern Muslim world. For far too long the study of Islam in South-East Asia, or the South-East Asian region as part of the Muslim world, has not received the attention it deserves. Indonesianists often treat Islam and Muslim civilization as a 'thin veneer' over older cultural and religious deposits from elsewhere in Asia, while Islamicists regard the area as of limited interest to their field, because of its peripheral geographical location on the eastern fringe of the Muslim world. Consequently, South-East Asian Islam has fallen through the cracks between academic specialisms. By amplifying developments in the world's largest Muslim nation-state, including reactions to the caliphate debate, this book seeks to make a contribution to correcting that dual marginalization.

In the context of the present examination of the ways in which the historical and conceptual caliphate continues to feature in the mind of contemporary Muslims, South-East Asia admittedly occupies an exceptional position. Historical and archaeological evidence indicates that, even though relations between South-East Asia and the Middle East date back to pre-Islamic times and Muslim visitors, and later expatriate communities, were present in emporiums and other centres of commerce for centuries, local chronicles record that it was not until the fifteenth century that rulers began converting to Islam. Even then this was often only done tentatively in the first instance. According to some scholars it is therefore preferable to speak initially of adhesion rather than conversion, indicating that Islam was accepted and accommodated alongside other religious practices and beliefs.²⁵ The earliest surviving documents in regional vernaculars confirming the existence of a distinct South-East Asian Muslim culture and tradition of Islamic learning date no further back than the seventeenth century.

Consequently, the area now occupied by Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, the southernmost provinces of Thailand, and the Philippines was never part of the territories controlled by any of the great historical caliphates. The Umayyads and 'Abbasids had long gone before Islam got a firm foothold in insular South-East Asia. In fact, the whole conversion was also remarkable

²⁴ Ibid.; Reinhard Schulze, *Islamischer Internationalismus im 20. Jahrhundert: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der islamischen Weltliga*, Leiden et al.: Brill, 1990.

²⁵ Nehemia Levtzion, *Conversion to Islam*, New York: Holmes & Meier, 1979, p. 19.

INTRODUCTION

in the sense that it did not involve military conquest. Instead, Islam was initially introduced peacefully to the various ethnic groups inhabiting the region, which began using the Malay dialect spoken along the Malacca Straits as a *lingua franca* that eventually spread through the whole region. Increasingly detailed research has shown that there is no sign of what Anthony Johns called a 'single big-bang theory' which can provide an overall explanation of the mechanics of South-East Asia's Islamization. In fact, it is 'virtually impossible to over-emphasize the discrete, idiosyncratic and diverse character of the port cities of the region which were the foci of Islamic settlement'.²⁶ In the absence of a single answer to the questions of when, from where, and how Islam came to South-East Asia we must therefore look for a 'variety of starting points' and 'numerous modalities for its diffusion'.

Islam reached the Malay-Indonesian archipelago from the eastern coasts of the Indian subcontinent, the western region of Gujarat, China and Persia, and directly from the Arabian Peninsula. It travelled along existing trade routes, which began doubling as the conduits for networks of Sufis and *'ulama*, carrying mystical doctrines and mainstream Islamic learning across the Indian Ocean to maritime South-East Asia. After the collapse of the 'Abbasid caliphate under the onslaught of successive waves of invasions from Central Asia, capped by the Mongol sacking of Baghdad in 1258, Sufi brotherhoods or mystical orders stretching across the Muslim world effectively stepped into this power vacuum, becoming a key institution that held together the fabric of the world of Islam. Similarly, the phenomenon of the *rihla*—a journey in search of learning often undertaken in combination with performance of the pilgrimage to Mecca—ensured that religious scholars from different parts of the Islamic world remained in touch with each other. It was within the framework of these sustained contacts that traffic back and forth between the Middle and the Far East, involving both foreign and indigenous Muslims, created a distinct South-East Asian Muslim culture that came to be referred to as Jawi, after the name given to the Arabized Malay that became its prime medium.²⁷

²⁶ Anthony H. Johns, 'From Coastal Settlement to Islamic School and City: Islamization in Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula and Java', in J. Fox (ed.), *Indonesia: Australian Perspectives*, Canberra: ANUU, Research School of Pacific Studies, 1980, pp. 164–5; Anthony H. Johns, 'Islam in the Malay World: An Exploratory Survey and Some Reference to Quranic Exegesis', in R. Israeli and A. H. Johns (eds), *Islam in Asia: Volume II Southeast and East Asia*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1984, p. 117.

²⁷ The term was evidently taken from the name of the most populous island in the

Through centuries of participation in these scholarly networks, Malay, Javanese, Bugi, Moro, and many other Muslims from the region turned South-East Asia into an integral part of the *dar al-Islam*. Even though it never belonged politically to the caliphates of the classic era, or their Mamluk and Ottoman heirs, South-East Asian Muslims developed through contacts with Muslims from elsewhere at centres of learning in the Hijaz, and later also in Cairo, an awareness of and interest in an overarching Islamic sense of belonging. However, at the same time these very exchanges also instilled a distinct sense of the existence of a 'Jawi ecumene' within the wider Muslim world.²⁸ Throughout this period we also find instances of political alliances between regional powers and the Ottoman empire, which, following the capture of Cairo in 1517, had effectively become the seat of the caliphate. For example, in the course of the sixteenth century a naval alliance was established between the Ottomans and the sultanate of Aceh in Northern Sumatra.²⁹

Another manifestation of this kind of Muslim solidarity occurred in the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in what by then had become the Dutch East Indies. Aside from Indonesian Muslims, this vast expanse was also home to what the Dutch colonial authorities referred to as *Vreemde Oosterlingen* ('Foreign Orientals'). Many of them came from areas that were still—often only nominally—under Ottoman political control. In analogy with the treaties of extraterritoriality that many Western powers had concluded with the Sublime Porte in Istanbul, these Muslim residents of the Indies claimed that, since they were technically citizens of the Ottoman empire, they should fall under the jurisdiction of Ottoman diplomatic representatives in Batavia or nearby Singapore. This was firmly resisted by both the Dutch and British administrations, as Sultan Abdülha-

Indonesian archipelago; Michael Laffan's research has shown how it gained wider currency: Michael F. Laffan, 'Finding Java: Muslim Nomenclature of Insular South-east Asia from Śrīvijaya to Snouck Hurgronje', in E. Tagliacozzo (ed.), *Southeast Asia and the Middle East: Islam, Movement and the Longue Durée*, Stanford University Press, 2009, 17–64.

²⁸ Michael F. Laffan, *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia: The Umma below the Winds*, London: Routledge, 2003.

²⁹ Anthony Reid, 'Sixteenth Century Turkish Influence in Western Indonesia', *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, 10, 3, 1969, 395–414; see also R. Michael Feener, Patrick Daly, and Anthony Reid (eds), *Mapping the Acehnese Past*, Leiden: KITLV Press, 2011.

INTRODUCTION

mid had begun to ride the wave of pan-Islamism, emphatically playing up his Islamic credentials as caliph. This attempt to extend Ottoman influence into South-East Asia became all the more worrisome for the Western powers when the caliph-sultan began making overtures to Berlin in order to establish an alliance of sorts with the German Kaiser in the run-up to the First World War.³⁰

In the early twentieth century the disappearance of the caliphate following the establishment of the secular Turkish Republic was also felt in the Dutch East Indies. The foundation of what has now become the largest Muslim mass organization in the world is closely tied up with the ensuing caliphate crisis. By 1926 Muslims worldwide had become so divided over how fill the vacuum left by Atatürk's abolition of the caliphate that there were plans for two competing conferences to resolve the issue: one to be held in Cairo promoting King Fuad of Egypt, the other in Mecca under the patronage of the new ruler of the Hijaz, 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Sa'ud—who became the first king of Saudi Arabia six years later. When plans by leading Javanese *'ulama* to participate in the Mecca conference were sabotaged by the competing modernist Muhammadiyah, who favoured attending the Cairo conference and excluded traditionalist religious scholars from their delegation, the traditionalists went on a counter-offensive. They used the occasion of the gathering of *'ulama* ready to travel to Arabia to establish a rival Muslim organization, called the Nahdlatul Ulama.

Although nothing came of either the Cairo or the Mecca conference, conceptualizations of a new caliphate did not disappear, and continued to feature in the political context of independent Indonesia and Malaysia. From the late 1940s until the early 1960s the Javanese Muslim activist and Darul Islam leader S.M. Kartosuwiryo challenged the central government of President Sukarno in Jakarta, by establishing a renegade republic in West Java and in Southern Sumatra. As Chiara Formichi discusses in her forthcoming book, a symbolic discourse and concrete plan for an Islamic state featured prominently in Kartosuwiryo's political programme.³¹ Some of his ideological heirs, who include the alleged Jamaah Islamiyah founders Abu

³⁰ Aside from Laffan's *Islamic Nationhood*, these episodes are also competently discussed in various contributions found in Huub de Jonge and Nico Kaptein (eds), *Transcending Borders: Arabs, Politics, Trade and Islam in Southeast Asia*, Leiden: KILTV Press, 2002.

³¹ Chiara Formichi, *Islam and the Making of the Nation: Kartosuwiryo and Political Islam in Twentieth Century Indonesia*, Leiden: KILTV Press, forthcoming.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

Bakar Baasyir and Abdullah Sungkar, kept the idea of a South-East Asian caliphate alive during their exile in Malaysia in the 1980s and 1990s.

THE IDEA OF THE CALIPHATE OUTSIDE THE MUSLIM-MAJORITY COUNTRIES

The calls for the revival of the caliphate among Muslims outside the historically Muslim world, striking as they may seem, indicate that in the contemporary world its legacy persists as a concept and a vision of an ideal Muslim polity and society. However, rather than having a continuing autonomous 'ontological' existence,³² it owes its persistence to the fact that it still resonates with aspirations of people in different parts of the world, evoking a variety of meanings and images that are refracted in different fashions depending on local concerns, geopolitical vagaries, politics of identity, and generational change. Therefore, in order to comprehend the appeals of the caliphate as an idea we would be best advised to extend our focus beyond political issues and look at motives that can be related to social problems, cultural anxieties, and individual aspirations. To a large extent these considerations apply to the Northern Caucasus where the historic visions and contemporary constructions of ideal Islamic polities have found appeal among different groups and movements, some primarily aiming at resisting the Russian domination and others more concerned with the post-Soviet generation's search for an alternative social and moral community.³³

Islam has been instrumental in the complex history of regional resistance to Russian domination, the concept of a caliphate being introduced here by the conquering Arabs as early as the mid-seventh century. However, the closest encounter with the caliphate occurred in the fifteenth century when nearly the entire region came under the rule of the Ottoman sultans. The extent to which Caucasian Muslims came to see themselves as the caliph's subjects is evident in the fact that after the Russian victory over the Ottomans in the Caucasian War (1817–64) masses of them preferred to leave their homeland and resettle within the confines of the caliph's land.³⁴ How-

³² Fraser, 'Islamic Caliphate'.

³³ Although in the Northern Caucasus around fifty ethnic groups constitute the Muslim majority, we include the region in this section on the grounds that politically it is part of the Russian Federation.

³⁴ Andreas Kappeler, *The Russian Empire: A Multiethnic History*, London and New York: Longman, 2001, p. 184.

INTRODUCTION

ever, reflecting the political complexities of the time—which should give a pause for thought to those imagining the caliphate as a unitary and bounded political project—the sultans refused to support the Caucasian anti-Russian resistance movement of the 1830s to the 1850s, provoking one of its leaders, Imam Shamil, to declare the establishment of an independent Islamic state in what are now Dagestan and Chechnya. In turn, the Ottomans saw this as a challenge to their authority as caliphs and refused to grant legitimacy to the new rebellious political entity.³⁵

After Shamil's defeat by Russian forces the idea of caliphate steadily lost currency in the region, but it re-emerged—though in a much attenuated form—among anti-Bolshevik Islamic resistance groups in the 1920s and 30s. Following the fall of the Soviet Union it resurfaced again among some Chechen rebels, as their armed struggle against the Russians unfolded and elements of the global jihadi rhetoric came to the fore and began to compete with secular nationalist ideology.³⁶ In the new rhetoric the Russians became 'infidels', the nationalists turned into global Islamic jihadis, and their struggle was upgraded to that for global *shari'a* rule. However, this new call had little to do with restoration of the historical caliphate; interestingly, Hizb al-Tahrir missionaries did not find any success in the region, and were vehemently opposed by local Islamist activists of different strands.³⁷ Moreover, the immediate concern of the militants remained to find a shared basis for mobilization against the Russian federal and pro-Russian regional forces in the region, which was marked by ethnic tensions among Muslims themselves. After the nationalist programme failed the caliphate (in the conceptual sense) was evoked as a symbol of unity for a new geopolitical project of creating a Caucasian emirate as a regional militant outpost of the global *umma's* struggle against the infidel. However, this kind of project should be distinguished from post-Soviet non-militant movements, such as some of those associated with Salafism, which evoke the caliphate as an ideal, *shari'a*-based system that can be emulated through creation of 'genuine' Muslim communities within existing national borders rather than

³⁵ On Shamil and his politics see Moshe Gammer, *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnia and Dagestan*, London: Frank Cass, 1994.

³⁶ Shireen Hunter, *Islam in Russia: The Politics of Identity and Security*, New York and London: M.E. Sharpe, 2004, pp. 150–52.

³⁷ Marat Shterin and Akhmet Yarlykapov, 'Reconsidering Radicalisation and Terrorism: The New Muslim Movements in Kabardino-Balkaria and its Path to Violence', *Journal of Religion, State, and Society*, 39, 2/3 (2011), 303–326.

through restoration of the historical caliphate. These movements seek alternatives to the failing post-Soviet institutions and old communities that they see as morally corrupt and economically unviable. However, the situation of continuing political instability, compounded by persecution at the hands of local authorities, can contribute to extremist radicalization of some of these new groups and their trend towards more militant positions, including extremist conceptualizations of the caliphate.

Moving to Western Europe, we can observe a variety of groups and movements that evoke the idea of the caliphate as the historical polity, such as Hizb al-Tahrir, or as ideal Islamic governance, such as some Salafi groups. Among the former, Hizb al-Tahrir is undoubtedly the most conspicuous example, with its well-articulated programme of non-violent restoration of the historical caliphate. All these groups have found support mainly among those young Muslims who were raised in the West predominantly by parents with no links to the historic lands of the caliphate, causing concern both among policy makers and among many mainstream Muslims. Political reactions to this have varied: in Britain, Hizb al-Tahrir has been tolerated, while in Germany it is banned on the grounds that it promotes anti-Semitism.³⁸

Depending on the perspective, Hizb al-Tahrir can be—and has been—variously described as a new religious movement, a political party, or a religiously inspired political movement; and it undoubtedly displays all these elements. While its shared ideology and practice in different parts of the world have received some academic attention,³⁹ there has been a dearth of ethnographic research on its operation and membership in Western Europe. What the contributions to this volume do suggest, however, is that notwithstanding the commonalities in its membership profiles across the globe—relatively young, from better-off backgrounds, and better educated—Hizb al-Tahrir as a movement reflects a variety of local contexts.

In order to appreciate the movement's social or political significance we would be well advised to avoid getting carried away with surveys that seem to suggest a broad appeal of the idea of a caliphate among younger Muslims worldwide, including in Europe.⁴⁰ As with all surveys, their statistical findings require thorough analysis, not least with respect to the precise meaning

³⁸ Jean-Françoise Mayer, 'Hizb ut-Tahrir: The Next al-Qaida, Really?', PSIO Occasional Paper, 4/2004, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs DFA, pp. 13–14.

³⁹ Farooqi, *A Fundamental Quest*.

⁴⁰ See, for instance, Gallup polls: <http://www.gallup.com/se/127907/Gallup-Center-Muslim-Studies.aspx>.

INTRODUCTION

respondents attach to questions asked and answers given, and to the wider context in which these surveys are conducted.⁴¹ Among other things, the fact that some surveys point to the majority of young European respondents wishing to introduce ‘*shari’a* law’ through the establishment of ‘a caliphate’ only suggests that they are disappointed with some ways in which their societies are governed and could imagine possible alternatives rooted in the Islamic tradition. However, what precisely they mean by ‘*shari’a* law’ and ‘caliphate’, how actively they seek alternative polities, and whether they would respond differently in different circumstances require further questioning and analysis. Remarkably, the same surveys, such as those mentioned above, are used both by Hizb al-Tahrir activists as evidence of broad support for their cause and by their opponents to ring alarm bells and call for restricting or altogether banning the movement’s activities. Meanwhile, other surveys suggest a more nuanced picture of the ways in which young European Muslims view their identity, loyalty, and ‘Islamic’ causes. Thus, some surveys conducted in Britain have indicated a much stronger sense of British identity and democratic citizenship than both Islamophobic and pro-Islamist accounts would have us believe.⁴²

Rather than assuming the idea of the caliphate working as an independent ‘ontological’ factor among Muslims raised in the West, we may get a better insight into what might motivate some of them to prioritize the Islamic aspects of their identity and to respond to the calls for establishing an Islamic political order by looking at the conditions of their socialization and cultural exposures. From this perspective we may well discover, as has already been suggested,⁴³ that these young Muslims share a range of significant characteristics with non-Muslims of the same generational cohort.

⁴¹ For a general discussion of the issues involved in statistical analysis of attitudes and behaviour with special reference to religion see David Voas, ‘Surveys of Behaviour, Beliefs, and Affiliation: Micro-Quantitative’, in James Beckford and N.J. Demerath (eds), *The SAGE Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, Los Angeles and London: SAGE Publications, 2007, 144–66.

⁴² See Clive Field, ‘Young British Muslims since 9/11: A Composite Attitudinal Profile’, *Journal of Religion, State, and Society*, 39, 2/3 (2011) 159–76; also Maria Sobolewska, ‘Religious Extremism in Britain and British Muslims: Threatened Citizenship and the Role of Religion’, in Roger Eatwell and Matthew Goodwin (eds), *The New Extremism in Twenty-First Century Britain*, Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2010, 23–46.

⁴³ Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah*, London: Hurst & Co., 2004.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

Among other things they have been raised, very much like their Western contemporaries, in a predominantly urban, multi-cultural environment; they can exercise their freedom to construct their own identity through a variety of sources, including those available through the global new media; they feel free to oppose aspects of government's international and domestic policies and to form social groups and movements pressing for change.

Somewhat paradoxically, rather than necessarily assuming their ascribed ethnic Islamic identity (as Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Moroccans, Algerians, etc.) they can choose what they see as a universal Islamic identity and construct faith-based global solidarities. This process of choosing and constructing is both pushed and facilitated by sharing urban space with Muslims from other ethnic backgrounds as well as non-Muslims, and by engagement in global virtual discourses on Islamic issues. At the same time they are pushed to define and declare their identity because of the reality of social policy (for example, housing Muslim immigrants in particular areas) and ubiquitous cultural identity politics with their pervasive faith-based categorization. As a result, they become sensitized to, and learn to express their grievances and aspirations through, the symbolic, conceptual, and imaginary repertoires of 'deterritorialized' Islamic discourses. While being raised within societies still very much defined by the institutions of nation-states, many young Western Muslims readily identify with and care for other people in other parts of the globe whom they see as sharing the key marker of their identity: their faith. The political and cultural reality of Western European nation-states thus can come into tension with the psychology and logistics of transnationalism.

It is this milieu that Hizb al-Tahrir and similar movements seek to affect through their own globalized and universalized discourses conducted both in social space and, conspicuously, via the preferred medium of this cyber generation. The extent to which these movements are successful in making recruits is still unclear but, given the relatively small numbers of their committed members and the absence of any other sign of significant social or political mobilization, the answer perhaps will not be pleasing to them. The relatively higher level of activism and visibility (not to be taken as social significance) of Hizb al-Tahrir in Western Europe by comparison with the lands of the historical caliphate may still seem remarkable and paradoxical. However, the possible explanation for this may have to do with both the milieus in which the movement operates and the public reactions to it. On the one hand, as Olivier Roy points out, Hizb al-Tahrir's conception of the

INTRODUCTION

caliphate is far removed from its historical reality and is meant for those among modern, mainly younger, audiences who are—or, presumably, can be—attuned to issues of identity, social justice, minority and human rights, post-colonial discourses, and concerns about international politics.⁴⁴ Their grievances are often directed towards national governments and socio-political establishments that do not live up to the lofty moral expectations these young people internalize, particularly in their experiences as a minority. On the other hand, through the psychology and logistics of transnationalism these grievances become grafted onto frustrations about injustices, real or perceived, in the Muslim lands. Thus, some young people raised in the West may find an elective affinity between their engagement with these issues and the imaginings of the caliphate as an ideal supra-national polity where all the solutions would be found and within which they would become a moral majority.⁴⁵ This is quite different from those young people raised, for instance, in the Middle East, who aspire for more personal freedom, for liberation from dictatorships or occupation, and for economic and social development in countries where they as Muslims belong to the majority. For them, their grievances and aspirations can be more effectively pursued within national borders, while the historical caliphate that used to exist in their lands is less likely to provide relevant models and solutions.

THE VOLUME

In this volume we are not concerned with the history of various Islamic caliphates from Medina and Cordoba to Damascus, Baghdad, Istanbul, and beyond. Historians of the Muslim world have dealt with the rise and fall of previous Islamic caliphates in the heartland of the Muslim world and on the periphery. Ottoman historians excelled in interpreting the evolution of the last Islamic caliphate, the Ottoman empire, and its political evolution. Instead, we hope to demystify contemporary calls for the resurrection of the caliphate, with the objective of moving away from alarmist interpretations and unfounded generalizations. In order to demystify the present concern over the caliphate we take the twentieth century as our starting historical

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ 'Elective affinity' is a concept originally coined by Goethe but elaborated sociologically by Max Weber to refer to interactions between certain beliefs, ideas, and norms on the one hand and social practices and interests on the other to produce new social attitudes, movements, and trends.

time. While we acknowledge that there are contemporary Muslim activists who consider this call a central theme in their political agenda and have succeeded in rallying Muslims across the globe behind this powerful slogan, we do not consider this late development a main feature of the decades that immediately followed the abolition of the Ottoman caliphate in 1924, nor is it a general demand by all contemporary Muslims. In fact we show that in some Muslim localities there had been consistent attempts to break up previous caliphates by appealing to ethnic, national, and religious/sectarian sentiments. In order to understand this diversity we adopt an approach grounded in history and social sciences. The first aspect allows an exploration of twentieth-century local contexts, mainly at that critical moment when the Ottoman empire ceased to exist, while the second permits contemporary investigation of current trends among diverse Muslims.

Contributors to this volume include both historians of ideas within Islamic studies and social scientists conducting research in diverse countries. This interdisciplinary approach provides analysis of historical trends and ideas as a precursor to understanding the meaning and implication of the caliphate as a contested concept rather than an aspiration that is taken for granted in modern times.

We explore two themes. First, the immediate historical responses to the fall of the Ottoman caliphate in 1924 among Muslims as far as Jakarta are one main focus of this book. Rather than perpetuating an unfounded claim that Muslims have not recovered from the fall of the Ottoman caliphate, and are continuing to suffer a humiliating crisis and a desire to reverse the turn of events, we find that Muslim reactions were as diverse as the cultural, historical, and national contexts in which they lived. We therefore dismiss sweeping sensational generalizations about the psychological communal trauma suffered by all Muslims the day after the Ottoman caliphate was abolished. Rather than this being a communal crisis touching religion and politics and amounting to a historical psychosis, intellectual elites and societies across the Muslim world demonstrated a far from uniform response. While some intellectuals and political leaders had envisaged an alternative caliphate to the vanishing one, not all Muslims mourned the demise of the longest-surviving caliphate in Islamic history. For some intellectuals and leaders a new era encapsulating the promise of imagining an alternative to religious politics had just begun. Of course there were those who longed for the continuation of the tradition of caliphate rule, but these longings must be understood within the contexts of each society, the pressures exerted on

INTRODUCTION

them by colonial powers, and their own interpretations of religious texts, rather than as an indication of nostalgia or crisis following defeat.

Second, contemporary Muslim debates that either glorify the caliphate, condemn it, or reinterpret it draw on that diverse historical memory following 1924. The historical diversity at the level of responses is also present today. There are very loud voices both in the Muslim world and among diaspora Muslims calling for the re-establishment of the caliphate, but these voices do not represent all Muslims or reflect their aspirations; both remain anchored in local contexts with their own political constraints. Globalization and the wide availability of new communication technology have definitely sharpened a sense of belonging to one Muslim community, but have not created consensus over the resurrection of the caliphate. There is no doubt that a virtual Islamic *umma* is well represented and articulated on the internet and in real regional and transnational institutions, but the caliphate is something totally different. What is most obvious in the real and virtual worlds is a deep sense of sharing common grievances, wealth and dreams, but real mobilization around the caliphate remains limited despite the spectacle of images and speeches during conferences, open marches, and ceremonies.

Following our focus on twentieth-century history and contemporary issues, part I of this volume is a collection of historical accounts that examine varied responses to the fall of the Ottoman caliphate. From Istanbul to New Delhi, Jakarta and Jerusalem, Muslims realized the centrality of this event and the consequences of moving into a new political era in which Muslims were no longer contained within, if not an overarching political entity, a regional state faithful to the rule of *shari'a*. The first part of this volume contains four historical chapters that document the multiple immediate responses to the abolition of the Ottoman caliphate. Basheer Nafi (chapter 1) focuses on the debates that fermented in the capital of the last caliphate, Istanbul, where among many influential actors Mustafa Kemal Atatürk came to the conclusion that maintaining the Islamic caliphate would constitute not only a threat but also a burden. Together with other Turkish nationalists he was concerned with maintaining the integrity of the core Turkish-speaking people in Anatolia. He endorsed the territorial nation-state at the expense of clinging to the idea of a defeated empire/caliphate. The abolition of the caliphate instigated a scramble, to use Nafi's word, over its seat, especially among the Arabs of the empire. There was an instant clash between the Hashemite alternative, Saudi aspirations, and Egyptian desires without any leader being able to push his own dream of

becoming an overarching ruler. By 1940 the politics of the caliphate seemed a distant memory, though the question did not entirely disappear from the imagination of Arabs.

Qasim Zaman ([chapter 2](#)) shows just how prominent debates about the caliphate were among Indian Muslims in the context of his analysis of the Khilafat Movement. But such debates formed the basis of a set of ideas and debates about law, legal reform, socio-economic justice, and above all anti-colonial political culture. The formation of Pakistan was informed by early debates about the caliphate, but Indian Muslims seem to have endorsed a secular state as the best hope for the preservation of their culture and identity, according to Zaman. So discourses about the caliphate were not only about power, domination and nostalgia but were mainly focused on wider issues that were relevant to Indian Muslims under British colonial rule and later Pakistani Muslims. His exploration of the writings of Mawdudi as one of the most influential twentieth-century Muslim thinkers and activists in Pakistan shows that he was concerned with a fundamental question: what caused the decline of the caliphate of the first four Islamic caliphs (the Rightly Guided Caliphs or Rashidun) who succeeded the Prophet. His chapter invites the reader to move away from alarmist reactions that are often associated with Muslim calls for the resurrection of the caliphate and consider the local contexts in which debates about the caliphate flourished. It seems that such debates are much more concerned with the issues of the present than with a deep-seated nostalgia about the past. Invoking the ideal type of the caliphate serves the purpose of engaging in debates about contemporary legal, religious and political concerns facing Muslims in the Indian subcontinent.

Still in British India, Jan-Peter Hartung ([chapter 3](#)) delves into the writings of three influential twentieth-century Muslim intellectuals who advocated individual and different responses to the question of the caliphate. Muhammad 'Ali Jawhar, Abu 'l-Kalam Azad, and Abu 'l-A'la Mawdudi offered in their writings ideas anchored in their understanding of Islam, politics, and history. Mawdudi seems to have made a permanent impact as his approach was influenced by a reassessment of the failure of the Khilafat Movement in British India. It seems that his concern with resurrecting the caliphate stemmed from a firm belief in entitlement to political leadership and in restoring Islam to its status as a system of life.

The circulation of often unexpected ideas in Asia is pushed further by Chiara Formichi ([chapter 4](#)). Her archival research and survey of the Dutch

INTRODUCTION

East Indies vernacular press during the interbellum period provides some very valuable insights into the other side of the coin of the fallout from Atatürk's abolition of the caliphate. It shows the widespread and lively interest among secular nationalists in the Dutch colony in Kemalist ideology, leaving a distinct impact on Sukarno, its leading activist for independence and first president of the Indonesian Republic. Formichi argues that Sukarno quarried Kemalist ideology, especially for ways to manage religion in a modern state. Meanwhile, the attitude of Muslim activists towards the ideas of Mustafa Kemal was ambivalent, as they were torn 'between condemnation and admiration'.

The historical chapters are followed in part II by contributions from social scientists who trace debates about the caliphate in the present. The case studies address urgent questions that promise to clarify and explain why contemporary Muslims are still debating the caliphate while developing multiple reactions to and interpretations of the historical polity. Contributors to this section identify important conditions associated with late modernity that give an impetus to both the revival of the caliphate idea among diverse Muslims and an outright rejection of it by some. This includes identifying competing claims to the caliphate among contemporary Muslims who belong to a variety of national and ethnic societies. This allows us to distinguish between various ways of imagining the Muslim polity in which the tension between a global Muslim identity and a narrow ethnic belonging is still far from being resolved, despite decades of globalization and, more recently, pervasive virtual communication technology. They also highlight the relevance of sociological conditions that make calls for the caliphate resonate with a growing section of the Muslim population in both the Muslim world and Europe. This focus will identify specific grassroots factors that prompt individuals to mobilize along calls for the return of the caliphate, and explain the new ways of imagining it. Authors explore the differences in the political projects of those who call for the caliphate and the means to achieve their objectives. This will allow us to arrive at a better understanding of the diversity of responses to modernity within political Islamist groups that operate in the Muslim world and Europe.

Part II of this volume contains several case studies from the Muslim world and the diaspora where such debates are today made public through mobilization, virtual forums, and textual references. In the Arab world Madawi Al-Rasheed, Fareed Sabri, and Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen deal with debates about the caliphate in Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Syria respectively.

Today the memory of the caliphate lingers either as a detested Turkish blasphemy (chapter 5, Al-Rasheed), a mere nostalgia (chapter 6, Sabri), or an occasion to convey political messages through television drama dealing with the lives and rule of past caliphs (chapter 7, Skovgaard-Petersen). It seems that the historical centres of the Arab and Muslim world where modern realities override a strong belief in resurrecting the caliphate have generated no consensus over this much-talked-about historical polity. There is no unified memory attached to the caliphate in these contemporary contexts. In fact, we find that the last Ottoman caliphate is remembered among Saudi jihadis as an aberration of Islam and *shari'a* rule. Hence contemporary local Islamist activists in Riyadh condemn the Ottoman legacy. In Baghdad the Muslim Brotherhood and its contemporary political wing, the Iraqi Islamist Party, retain the imagery of the city as the seat of the 'Abbasid caliphate but rarely invoke its resurrection in their political discourse. The caliphate remains a symbol of past glory, clashing with the reality of the multi-ethnic and multi-sectarian society of contemporary Iraq. In Syria and Egypt the dramatization of the lives and reigns of famous past caliphs, from the 'Abbasid Harun al-Rashid to the Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid II, provide platforms for debating the caliphate not as a religious and political institution but as a form of government upon which local contemporary concerns are juxtaposed. The dramatized just caliph and his relation with his subjects become platforms for debating contemporary autocratic rule, injustice, paternalistic government, and colonialism.

Away from the Arab world, Carool Kersten (chapter 8), Claudia Neff (chapter 9), and Emmanuel Karagiannis (chapter 10) examine the contemporary scene in Indonesia and Central Asia. The historical overview has made clear that South-East Asia was never an integral part of the historical caliphate in the sense that its territory fell under the effective political control of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, the successive Umayyad and 'Abbasid dynasties, or the nominal caliphates controlled by the Egyptian Mamluks or Ottoman Turks. Also, in the Central and South Asian regions caliphal authority had been precarious at best. However, this does not mean that there was not a sense of belonging to *dar al-Islam* or a sentiment of solidarity which connected Asian Muslims outside the Middle East with the Islamic 'heartlands'. On the contrary, in modern times some of the most emphatic and illustrative examples of the desire to revive the caliphate, if not in its historical institutional form then at the very least as an alternative Islamic political conceptualization, can be found in South and Central Asia.

INTRODUCTION

As for present times, Emmanuel Karagiannis's examination of the place of Neo-Caliphatism as an alternative ideology for Uzbek Muslims is illustrative of the sea change affecting this former Soviet republic, as well as other Central Asian republics such as Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The appeal of organizations such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, the Islamic Jihad Union, and Hizb ut-Tahrir demonstrates that the desire to re-establish an Islamic political institution is still very strong among Central Asian Muslims, manifesting itself in active campaigning for the reinstatement of a form of governance inspired by both the historical caliphate and Islamic political theorizing. The global reach of movements advocating such discourses and their appeal for well-educated Muslims are further illustrated by the contribution of Claudia Nef. Based on intensive fieldwork in Indonesia, she shows how campus activism by Hizbut Tahrir keeps the idea of a caliphate alive among university students in the central Javanese city of Yogyakarta, the seat of one of two remaining sultanates in Indonesia and thus itself the embodiment of a fascinating hybrid mix of Indian images of kingship and Muslim governance.

Carool Kersten has examined an entirely different interpretation of the caliphate by Nurcholish Madjid, one of Indonesia's leading Muslim intellectuals during the New Order regime and the first decade of the post-1998 Reformasi Era. Rising to prominence in the late 1960s as chairman of the Association of Muslim Students (HMI), he was initially hailed by Muslim modernists as 'Natsir Muda' or the 'Young Natsir'. They regarded him as the anointed successor of Muhammad Natsir, the former leader of the by then defunct Masyumi Party, Indonesia's main Islamic political party until its dissolution on the orders of President Sukarno in 1960 for alleged involvement in the proclamation of the renegade Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia (PRRI). Squeezed between the ambitions of Islamist activists and the military-led New Order regime, which opposed any manifestations of political Islam, Madjid thought he had found a way out by introducing the slogan 'Islam, Yes! Islamic Party, No!', making him a hero to his supporters and notorious among his detractors. As Kersten's contribution shows, Madjid consistently stuck to this line and developed a completely alternative concept of the caliphate, grounded in the Qur'anic notion of *khilafa* as 'human vicegerency on earth'. Admittedly this had nothing to do with either the restoration of the historical caliphate or the invention of a new pan-Islamic political institution, but Madjid's intellectual—even cerebral—rereading of the concept did find an audience among a certain seg-

ment of Indonesia's Muslim intelligentsia. It provided an acceptable paradigm for a return of Islam in the public sphere without challenging the Pancasila doctrine enshrined in the Indonesian constitution.

We find heated debates on the caliphate in some parts of the world where Muslims constitute minorities, either with their own administrative homelands within one state, such as in the Russian Northern Caucasus, or as ethno-religious minorities within Western European nation-states.

As Marat Shterin and Akhmet Yarlykapov show, in the Northern Caucasus Islam is both the common marker of identity for around fifty ethnic groups and a subject of contention between its different strands and interpretations. The authors argue that the contemporary evocations of the idea of the caliphate in the region reflect the failure of late Soviet and post-Soviet social institutions, including state authority, to resolve a tangle of geopolitical, social, and moral issues. However, while this idea is present, in one way or another, in the minds of all Islamic activists in the region, it is evoked for different reasons, associated with different movements, and can take different trajectories, depending, among other things, on how it is received in the wider society. Thus, some *jamaats* in Dagestan and the New Muslims movement in Kabardino-Balkaria can be best understood as attempts to create alternative communities based on *shari'a* law in opposition to the pervasive networks rooted in kinship and clan that many young Muslims tend to reject as socially restrictive, morally corrosive, and—remarkably—anti-modern. However, the combined effects of persecution by local authorities and the impact of the pan-regional militant jihadi groups increasingly undermined the non-violent stance of these movements' leadership and reinforced politically irreconcilable factions within them. The militant jihadis, on the other hand, used the reference to the caliphate and associated Islamic polities (imamate or emirate) to legitimize, and mobilize for, their secessionist armed struggle against the Russian 'infidel' and his regional allies and as a basis of their political project of creating an Islamic stronghold in the region, politically manifested in the Jamaat Shariat and the Caucasian Emirate.

Focusing on Western Europe and in particular Britain, Reza Pankhurst (chapter 11) discusses two new groups that have gained some following from Muslim communities and converts to Islam: the Jama'ah-tul-Muslimien headed by Mohammad al-Rifaa'e, and the Murabitun, led by Abdul-Qadir as-Sufi (also known as Ian Dallas). Pankhurst argues that the caliphate as an idea is widely shared by Muslims in the West (or Muslim

INTRODUCTION

diaspora), reflecting their longing for a unifying symbol, authentic authority, and sense of belonging. However, he also shows the different ways in which the two groups interpret and use this idea, reflecting differences in their leaders' backgrounds, membership profiles, and concerns over political, social, and cultural issues. Thus, the leader of the Jama'ah, who is a UK-resident Jordanian with a background in the Afghan Mujahideen resistance to the Soviet invasion, is primarily concerned about Muslim political disunity. His calls for a restoration of unity as a prerequisite for the establishment of an Islamic state are inextricably linked to appeals to withdraw as much as possible from Western institutions and 'un-Islamic' individuals. In contrast, Ian Dallas's personal background links him to the British social and cultural elite, including those with left-wing leanings, and his religious trajectory is rooted in Western new social movements that seek alternative communal living, societal reformation, and, more recently, anti-globalism. While rejecting the Western economic—and in particular banking—system and calling for its replacement with a *shari'a*-based alternative, the Murabitun encourage their members and other Muslims to participate fully in British political institutions. Thus Pankhurst's contribution provokes the intriguing question of whether the idea of the caliphate is likely to serve as a unifying symbol for Muslims or tends to cause further factional divisions among those who work towards it.

CONCLUSION

We have seen how throughout the twentieth century calls for the re-establishment of the caliphate were modest and unsuccessful in Arab lands and more vigorous but equally unfruitful in South-East Asia and outside Muslim-majority countries. In contemporary contexts the situation reflects an equally mixed response.

While the notion of an *umma* is well anchored in Islamic texts since the advent of Islam, and lived as a reality in Muslim rituals such as the pilgrimage, conditions of modernity—especially globalization as its latest dimension, with its intensified circulation of people and ideas—seem to have revived the utopian ideal of a caliphate. In other words, the more Muslims encounter each other in the real and virtual world, the more strongly some of them may desire to give a framework to these encounters. Furthermore, in the de-territorialized conditions of the diaspora some of them seem to have developed an acute longing for an Islamic territoriality, which the

concept of a caliphate rather than that of nation-state can encompass. As a result we find that calls for the resurrection of the caliphate are stronger among those Muslims who have been immersed in the conditions of modernity, from the nineteenth-century pan-Islamist scholar and activist Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (d. 1897) to Usama bin Laden (d. 2011) and the contemporary director of Hizb al-Tahrir, Abdul Wahid. It is unsurprising that Taqi al-Din al-Nabhani, who was forcibly ‘de-territorialized’ from his Palestinian homeland, was the first to systematically theorize the resurrection of the caliphate in the mid-twentieth century, a call that finds echoes among some from the second and third generation of Muslims living in the West or some young activists emerging out of decades of Soviet rule in Central Asia and Northern Caucasus, or among urban youths in Jakarta and elsewhere. Consequently, calls to re-establish the caliphate are not anchored in a pristine, traditional, scholastic longing for a bygone past but are a response to modernity and its conditions. Within this framework we can begin to comprehend the twentieth-century responses to the fall of the caliphate and the contemporary calls for its revival, either as a restoration of the historical polity or as a concept and vision of the ideal global society. Rather than being brushed aside as dreams and fantasies, these responses and calls can be better understood as modern manifestations of conditions that many Muslims have experienced in various degrees. The caliphate becomes an old idea, rejuvenated by contemporary reflections on the modern conditions that can only persist and intensify.

THE ABOLITION OF THE CALIPHATE IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Basheer M. Nafi

The abolition of the caliphate by the Turkish Grand National Assembly (GNA) on 3 March 1924 elicited strong feelings and heated debates throughout the Muslim world. Muslim circles opposed to the founder of republican Turkey, General Mustafa Kemal (later Atatürk; d. 1938), accused him of being an arch-enemy of the Ottoman state who had intended to abolish the caliphate long before his emergence as leader of the Turkish national movement. The Turkish leader was also accused of conspiring with the British against the caliphate and of using his role in the war of independence as a springboard to put an end to Islamic political power. It was also suggested that the abolition of the caliphate was the price that the Turkish nationalist side had to pay to win the Western powers' support for the newly established Turkish Republic and its independence.¹

¹ See, for example, Mustafa Sabri, *al-Nakir 'ala munkiri al-ni'ma min al-din wa'l-khilafa wa'l-umma*, Beirut: al-Matba'a al-'Abasiyya, 1924. Sabri, the last Ottoman *shaykh al-islam*, emerged as one of the staunchest opponents of the Kemalist regime and its vision of modern Turkey. This book reflects his profound belief in the institution of the caliphate and his equally deep suspicion of Mustafa Kemal. In a testimony to its continuous influence on the Muslim public view of the early 1920s events in Turkey, the book was reprinted again in 1998 (Amman: Dar al-Bayariq),

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

This chapter attempts to place the abolition of the caliphate in the historical context of the late Ottoman sultanate, modern Turkey, and the Muslim world, as well as the background of the Turkish nationalist leaders. It discusses the making of Mustafa Kemal and his nationalist colleagues as products of a modern military education and the destructive Ottoman defeat in the First World War; the resulting problems associated with the sources of legitimacy upon which the newly emerging state was to rest; the evolving divisions within the ranks of the leading men of the nationalist movement; and the configuration of power surrounding the Turkish Republic in the aftermath of the war of independence. This chapter will also discuss corresponding political moves and intellectual debates, engendered by the abolition of the caliphate, especially in the Arab-speaking countries of the Muslim world.

FROM SULTANATE TO REPUBLIC

Measured by any standard the abolition of the caliphate was a gigantic step, for the diverse Muslim people of the new country of Turkey had been ruled by a caliphate/sultanate for centuries, during which they knew no other system of government. For the Muslims of Turkey, as well as for Muslims elsewhere, the caliphate, effective and relevant or otherwise, was believed to be a religious institution, not only a political one. Yet it is difficult not to see the abolition of the caliphate as a sequel to the earlier termination of the sultanate and declaration of the republic just over a year earlier. On the one hand, once the sultanate was removed the caliphate was left without a real power base in the Turkish Republic, hostage to the will of Kemal and his associates. On the other, removal of the sultanate aroused fear among many of the nationalist leaders of the Turkish independence movement—fear of being marginalized, fear that Kemal was on the way to establishing a dictatorial, one-man regime, in which neither the Turkish people nor the Assembly would matter.

and recently an Egyptian academic has published a laudatory commentary on it. See Mustafa Hilmi, *al-Asrar al-khafiyya wana' ilgha' al-khilafa al-uthmaniyya*, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2004. On Mustafa Sabri see Khayr al-Din al-Zirikli, *al-A'lam*, Beirut: Dar al-'Ilm l'il-Malayin, 1989, vol. VII, p. 236. For an overview of the reactions to the fall of the caliphate see Muhammad Muhammad Husayn, *al-Itijahat al-wataniyya fi al-adab al-mu'asir*, Beirut: Maktabat al-Risala, 1984; first published in Cairo, 1956), vol. II, pp. 45–98.

THE ABOLITION OF THE CALIPHATE IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In the autumn of 1922, as the Turkish resistance forces led by Mustafa Kemal emerged triumphant in Anatolia, the Allied powers accepted Kemal's demands to replace the humiliating Sèvres peace treaty. Since the sultanate administration was still functioning in Istanbul the Allies invited both the Ankara government of the GNA and the Istanbul government to attend negotiations at Lausanne. On 1 November, in order to prevent a dual representation of the Turkish people, Kemal called on the National Assembly, to abolish the sultanate and vest power in the sovereignty of the Turkish people.²

A few years later, in his six-day speech of 1927, Mustafa Kemal recalled the day the six-centuries-old sultanate came to an end. As many members of the Assembly were uneasy about such a move the motion was referred to a combined meeting of three committees of the Assembly: the Constitution, *Shari'a* and Justice Committees, chaired by the mufti of Ankara, a member of the Assembly. Members of the *Shari'a* Committee, most of whom were men of religion, expressed the view that the sultanate and the caliphate could not be separated.³ As the deliberations seemed to reach no settlement, Mustafa Kemal, attending the meeting as an observer, asked permission to speak. In uncompromising words Kemal explained that the sultanate and sovereignty were not about traditions or scholarship, and that power now rested with the Ankara forces of liberation, not the sultan and Sublime Porte. He ended his intervention by saying:

It is no longer a question of knowing whether we want to leave this sovereignty in the hand of the nation or not. It is simply a question of stating a reality, something which is already an accomplished fact and which must be accepted unconditionally as such. And this must be done at any price. If those who are assembled here, the Assembly and everybody else would find this quite natural, it would be very appropriate from my point of view. Conversely, the reality will nevertheless be manifested in the necessary form, but in that event it is possible that some heads will be cut off.⁴

² Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. II: *Reform, Revolution, and Republic*, Cambridge University Press, 1976, p. 65; Alan Palmer, *The Decline and Fall of the Ottoman Empire*, London: John Murray, 1992, 258–9.

³ The whole episode is covered in Stanford J. Shaw, *From Empire to Republic: The Turkish War of National Liberation 1918–1923: A Documentary Study*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, 2000, vol. IV, pp. 1882–4 ff.

⁴ Ghazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, *The Great Speech*, 2nd edn, Ankara: Atatürk Research Centre, 2008, p. 570.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

But since Mustafa Kemal never enjoyed definitive control in the first National Assembly, and was conscious of religious sensibilities in the Assembly and among the people at large, he decided to retain the caliphate in the Ottoman house. Most probably he did not have a plan to abolish the caliphate in the first place. If he had, he did not disclose any of it. Subsequently, when the last Sultan/Caliph, Mehmet V Vahdettin (d. 1926), left the country aboard a British vessel, the National Assembly elected Abdülmecit II (d. 1944) to succeed him as Caliph, a Caliph without a sultanate.

The reluctance of the Assembly's joint committees to accept the proposal to abolish the sultanate was natural. Formed in April 1920 as an expression of the national will to resist the foreign occupation of the remaining part of the empire and its sovereignty, the GNA was made up of representatives of the national defence associations and about eighty-five members of the last Ottoman parliament who left Istanbul and joined the nationalists in Ankara. As the war of independence progressed, members of the Assembly coalesced around two major visions: the 'Eastern ideal' and the 'Western ideal'. The Easternists were largely inspired by the Bolshevik and anti-imperialist forces that swept through the Muslim world, advocating a republican system based on popular sovereignty. The Westernists, on the other hand, were opposed to what seemed to be the Easternists' Soviet leanings, and supported the continuation of the sultanate/caliphate Ottoman order, controlled by the constitution.⁵ At the heart of this division was the nature and political vision of the formative circles that initiated and undertook to organize the resistance movement.

The nationalist movement comprised military officers, government officials, professionals, religious functionaries, and local notables. Contrary to the version of history presented in Mustafa Kemal's famous 1927 speech, a large number of the military and political leaders of the nationalist movement and the 1920 GNA had been members of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). The *Taşkilat-ı Mahsusa*, the Special Organization of the Ottoman War Ministry, established by the War Minister and commander of the Ottoman army, Enver Pasha, in 1914 played an important role in preparing the ground for the resistance movement in Anatolia and in connecting the emerging Anatolian nationalist network with influential CUP military officers in Istanbul.⁶ CUP members were the dominant force

⁵ Shaw and Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 351.

⁶ For more details see the pioneering work of Erik J. Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor: The*

in the regional national defence associations that started to spring up from late 1918, immediately after the Ottoman defeat and the signing of the Mudros armistice and six months before Kemal's arrival at Samsun in May 1919 to assume his new position as inspector of the army in the east (later named the Third Army). In the July 1919 Congress of Erzurum, the first major demonstration of the national movement, out of which the Eastern Anatolia Society of the Defence of National Rights emerged, the delegates expressed their loyalty to the Sultan/Caliph. In its final statement the more important September 1919 Congress of Sivas, which gave rise to the Society for the Defence of National Rights in Anatolia and Rumelia, spoke of the preservation of the 'exalted seat of the caliph/sultan' as the responsibility of the national movement.⁷

Communications between the representative committee of the Defence of National Rights Society in Anatolia (effectively, the leading committee of the society), on the one hand, and the sultan, government, parliament, and military command in Istanbul, on the other, went well until the British occupation of Istanbul and the arrest of scores of nationalist parliamentarians, former ministers, and journalists in mid-March 1920, leading to the demise of the last Ottoman parliament, dominated by nationalists. It was the short-sightedness of this flagrant British move and the Sultan's decision to adopt an anti-nationalist policy by appointing Damat Ferit to the premiership on 5 April 1920 that finally broke relations between the nationalist leadership and Istanbul. Yet, following the formation of the GNA in Ankara late in April, Mustafa Kemal's first proclamation as its president was purposefully directed to the Sultan, affirming that 'we, your deputies, swear in the name of God and the Prophet, that the claim that we are rebels against the Sultan and Caliph is a lie. All we want is to save our country

Role of the Committee of the Union and Progress in the Turkish National Movement, 1905–1926, Leiden: Brill, 1984. See also Erik J. Zürcher, 'The Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic: An Attempt at a New Periodization', *Welt des Islams*, 32, 2 (1992), 237–53; and Erik J. Zürcher, 'Who Were the Young Turks?', in his *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building*, London: Tauris, 2010, 95–109.

⁷ For the proceedings of the congress of Erzurum see Mahmut Goloğlu, *Erzurum Kongressi*, Ankara: Kalite Matbaası, 1968), and on the congress of Sivas Mahmut Goloğlu, *Sivas Knogressi*, Ankara: Kalite Matbaası, 1969. Both congresses are also documented in Shaw, *From Empire to Republic*, vol. II, pp. 678–700 and 700–16, respectively.

from sharing the fate of India and Egypt.⁸ The Law of Fundamental Organization approved by the GNA in January 1921, the first constitutional document, envisioned a popular, constitutional, decentralized system of government,⁹ without indicating any intent to terminate the sultanate/caliphate. Soldiers were still being decorated with Ottoman medals well after the liberation war's decisive 1921 battle on the Sakarya, while the Sultan's birthday was officially celebrated in Ankara until 1922.¹⁰

In its early stages the overwhelming mood in the national movement reflected the political culture of the second constitutional period, dominated by the CUP view of things. Those meeting in Erzurum and Sivas or in the hall of the GNA, and the military officers who placed their forces under the GNA's command were nationalist in the sense that they sought to rescue what remained of the empire from foreign occupation and further dismemberment. Some, such as the framers of the National Covenant of the last Ottoman parliament, even hoped to restore a kind of Ottoman authority in the Arab-speaking provinces that had been lost during the war. At no point did a nationalist voice express the view of restructuring the state in a way that would lead to the abandonment of the Ottoman system of the sultanate/caliphate. The nationalist vision of the future revolved largely around a constitutional system of government, in which the sultan/caliph would represent the historical continuity of the Ottoman empire, and be accorded limited and defined powers.

Yet there is no doubt that Kemal and his supporters had a formidable case against the Sultan and his administration. Throughout the war of independence Mehmet V showed himself to be a feeble, ineffective, and insensitive sultan. While nationalist forces in Anatolia rallied behind the leadership of Kemal, and fought to safeguard the integrity and independence of the country, the Sultan opted to stay in the comfort of Istanbul, acquiescent to the British occupation. It is true that his representatives in the peace negotiations were unhappy with the terms of the Sèvres treaty;¹¹ yet his government still endorsed it, against the expressed wishes of the nationalists and the people at large. During the early months of 1920, as the GNA's government was taking shape in Ankara, Anatolia went to the brink of civil war.

⁸ Quoted in Andrew Mango, *Atatürk*, London: John Murray, 1999, p. 278.

⁹ Mahmut Goloğlu, *Üçüncü Meşrutiyet*, Ankara: Kalite Matbaası, 1970, pp. 400–2.

¹⁰ Erik J. Zürcher, 'The Politician as Historian, Historians in Politics', in his *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building*, London: Tauris, 2010, 6–16, esp. p. 14.

¹¹ Shaw, *From Empire to Republic*, vol. III, part 1, pp. 1129–31 ff.

THE ABOLITION OF THE CALIPHATE IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Regular and irregular forces in Anatolia, loyal to the government of Istanbul and carrying names such as the Disciplinary Forces, Muhammad's Forces, and Army of the Caliphate, launched war against the nationalist forces. In Istanbul Damat Ferit ordered a propaganda campaign against the nationalists, presenting them as Bolsheviks and godless Unionists, remnants of the Masonic CUP.

On 1 May 1920, and in response to the GNA's law of high treason, the Istanbul government sentenced Mustafa Kemal and a number of his supporters to death. The sentences were approved by the Sultan a few weeks later.¹² While Mustafa Kemal had no doubt been posted to Anatolia in 1919 at the Sultan's orders, once he relinquished his formal military post and assumed the leadership of the Society for the Defence of National Rights in Anatolia and Rumelia relations between the sultanate government in Istanbul and the nationalist movement in Anatolia sank into a state of rivalry and confrontation. Hence, when the question of representation at the Lausanne negotiations arose, Kemal realized that it was necessary to assert the sole legitimacy of Ankara and put an end to the division of authority. However, the question of power in the country was too complex to be decided by the single act of terminating the sultanate.

On 29 October 1923 the National Assembly resolved that 'the form of government of the Turkish state is a republic'.¹³ Besides his position as president of the National Assembly, Mustafa Kemal was also declared President of the Republic. In one sense the declaration of the republic represented another step towards solving the uncertainty surrounding the centre of authority in the evolving political system. In another it was a logical outcome of the conclusion of the Lausanne treaty and the Allied powers' recognition of the independence of Turkey, as defined by the Turkish nationalist charter (with a few exceptions, such as the Mosul and Iskenderun regions). No less important, the declaration of the republic was meant by Kemal to contain the power struggle in his own camp.

¹² Dankwart A. Rustow, 'Atatürk as an Institution Builder', in Ali Kazancigil and Ergun Özbudun (eds), *Atatürk: Founder of a Modern State*, London: Hurst & Co., 1981, 57–78, esp. pp. 66–7; Mango, *Atatürk*, pp. 276–9; Shaw and Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 352–5.

¹³ Shaw and Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 368; Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, London: Oxford University Press, 1961, pp. 254–6; Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, Montreal: McGill University Press, 1964, pp. 450–6.

What added to the challenge to Kemal's grip on the new regime was the siding of some of the most powerful military commanders, early comrades in arms in the nationalist movement, including Ali Fuat (Cebesoy), Refet (Bele), and Kazim Karabekir, with the opposition camp. They were soon to be joined by the Prime Minister of the National Assembly regime, Husayn Rauf (Orbay), who deeply resented Kemal's support of Ismet (Inönü) during the long, difficult negotiations at Lausanne, against the government's will. These were instrumental figures in the national movement, regarded very highly in the GNA and in the country at large. Karabekir was the first of the military commanders to arrive in Anatolia, achieving the first victories of the nationalists by securing the eastern borders against the Georgian and Armenian incursions. Rauf, the naval officer hero of the 1913 Balkan war, was second only to Mustafa Kemal in the early activities of the nationalists at Erzurum and Sivas; while Ali Fuat was the first military commander of the western front. In reality, the opposition could have never amassed adequate power to remove Kemal from his position, since he enjoyed the backing of the majority inside the Assembly and strong popular support outside it, as well as the loyalty of most of the army. Yet, troubled by frequent, vocal objections to his policies, widely echoed in the generally hostile Istanbul press, Mustafa Kemal used the elections for the second Assembly in the spring of 1923 to remove opposition deputies.¹⁴ He made sure, however, that Ali Fuat, Refet Bele, Kazim Karabekir, and Husayn Rauf were all elected on the government's list, for he was still hopeful of co-opting these critical comrades.

The Lausanne treaty was signed on 24 July, and the second Assembly elected Mustafa Kemal as its president on 13 August, upon which he gave a historic opening speech hailing Ismet and the negotiation team's achievement at Lausanne. On 13 October the Assembly approved a resolution, tabled by Ismet and fourteen other deputies, to declare Ankara the new capital of Turkey. The resolution, which underlined reasons of security behind the change of capital, stated that Istanbul would remain the seat of the caliphate,¹⁵ indicating that no plans had yet been devised to abolish the caliphate. During the next few days a crisis erupted over the forming of the new government, as the liberal loyalist Fethi (Okyar) replaced the now disenchanted Husayn Rauf as the chief executive.

¹⁴ Ahmet Demrel, *Birinci Meclis'te Muhalefet: İkinci Grup*, Istanbul: İletisim, 1994, pp. 375–7 ff.

¹⁵ Mango, *Atatürk*, p. 392.

Kemal and his supporters were soon to be reminded of the difficulty of sidelining his estranged comrades, and of the unyielding nature of the GNA, even after it was cleared of the opposition bloc. Since its establishment in 1920 the Assembly had assumed both the legislative and executive roles, thereby controlling the selection and replacement of the government members individually.¹⁶ It was, in fact, Mustafa Kemal who insisted on the supremacy of the Assembly, in order to prevent the emergence of an executive position that could be seen as a substitute for the sultan, thus constituting a cause of conflict between the resistance and the sultanate. Now, since the sultanate had been terminated, the new regime was obviously run without a head of state, a situation that Kemal was soon to become aware of.¹⁷ The newly born People's Party, now the only party in the Assembly, decided to appoint Sabit Bey, deputy for Erzincan, as Interior Minister, and the former Prime Minister Husayn Rauf as vice-president of the GNA; because the president was commonly absent Rauf was to be the *de facto* leader of the Assembly. On the other hand, since the People's Party was founded by Kemal to succeed the national defence societies, whose ranks supplied the bulk of deputies in the first GNA, the party was not yet cleansed of Kemal's opponents. Even though the elections had secured an unassailable majority in the Assembly, opposition within the party was still considerable. Kemal disapproved of both appointments, and swiftly moved to take his second major step to resolve the question of power at the helm of the state.¹⁸ By declaring the republic and electing Mustafa Kemal as its president, the GNA put an end to the ongoing argument about the ultimate form of the new state, and effectively relinquished its executive authority to the president and his government. Mustafa Kemal appointed his most loyal associate, Ismet Pasha, as Prime Minister, while Fethi was compensated with the position of Speaker of the Assembly. With the professional Marshal Fevzi (Çakmak) in charge of the army, maintaining order and allegiance to the president and the emerging regime, the centralized, modern state imagined by Mustafa Kemal started to take shape.

¹⁶ Shaw and Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 350–53; Hasan Kayali, 'The Struggle for Independence', in Reşat Kasaba (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, vol. IV: *Turkey in the Modern World*, Cambridge University Press, 2008, 112–46, esp. p. 143.

¹⁷ Atatürk, *The Great Speech*, p. 656.

¹⁸ For Kemal's version of the crisis over the making of the government see Atatürk, *The Great Speech*, pp. 636–40.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

Yet a few problems remained. First, rather than silencing the critical leading figures among his comrades, the pre-emptive step of declaring the republic intensified their suspicions that Kemal was seeking a total monopoly of power. Second, by creating the novel situation of a caliphate without a sultanate, hosted by the Turkish state but presumably possessing pan-Islamic attributes, the terms according to which Ankara was going to deal with the Caliph in Istanbul proved to be very difficult to define.

THE FINAL ACT

The assumption that Mustafa Kemal had from the very beginning of the national movement a blueprint for the future of Turkey, which required the abolition of the caliphate, is historically untenable. As an Ottoman officer Kemal was dedicated to the defence of the sultanate's integrity, without questioning whether sacrifices for the safeguarding of the Arabic- or Kurdish-speaking provinces were less worthy than those for their Turkish-speaking counterparts. He was among the small number of officers who volunteered to defend Libya against the Italian invasion in 1911, although like many other Ottoman officers at the time he was aware that the war was hopeless. During the First World War years he fought with distinction on the Gallipoli front against the British landing, on the eastern front against the Russians, and spent the last few months of the war trying to lead the Ottoman forces in Syria in as orderly a retreat as possible.¹⁹

Despite his later denials, Mustafa Kemal was almost certainly connected with CUP circles prior to and during the constitutional period.²⁰ Not at any stage of its rise to power did the CUP advocate a Turkish nationalist programme, although quite a few of its supporters sought to re-identify the empire in Turkish terms. In many respects the CUP's Turkification policies, in 1909–14, were largely motivated by the desire to centralize, and to contain the centrifugal forces threatening the survival of the empire, and were not a Turkish nationalist programme in the full sense. Mustafa Kemal's farewell meeting with the Sultan/Caliph in May 1919, days before embarking on his travel to Samsun as the inspector of the army in the east, was, to say the least, cordial. Later he claimed that he had opposed the terms of the

¹⁹ For a record of Mustafa Kemal's life until the end of the First World War see Hikmet Bayur, *Atatürk Hayatı ve Eseri*, Ankara: Akdtyk, 1990, vol. I.

²⁰ Kazım Karabekir, *İtihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti, 1896–1909*, Ankara: n.p., 1982, p. 179.

Mudros armistice and put the blame for accepting its humiliating conditions on the Sultan and his government. At the time, however, he, like many other Ottoman officials and military officers, most probably saw the armistice as the best available option to cut the empire's losses. Subsequently, in the early period of the war for independence, Kemal, along with the other nationalist leaders, was assertively consistent in presenting the nationalist movement in Anatolia as neither separatist nor directed against the authority of the caliphate/sultanate. The political language of the national movement was more often than not enveloped in Islamic discourse, as Kemal appealed to Muslim world opinion for support, and renewed contacts with anti-French and anti-British Arab officers in Syria and Iraq.

On the other hand, the vision of the modern state was intrinsic to the making of Mustafa Kemal and his generation of Ottoman army officers. Kemal was the product of the late Ottoman modernization period, particularly of the *harbiyya* (military) college, the Ottoman institution most deeply and comprehensively influenced by the process of modernization.²¹ His view of the world was largely modern, shaped by modern European thought on state and society. As the process of founding an alternative system of government in Ankara progressed he came to see both the sultanate and the caliphate as detrimental to the nationalist cause and to his own drive for power and authority. Motivations of power and authority were thus to be justified by the modern positivist discourse of progress and revival, in which the caliphate was presented as anachronistic, a link with the decaying Ottoman past that should be held accountable for the country's weakness and decline.

The positivist ideology of the emerging republic was not entirely new, but was rather rooted in the late nineteenth-century Ottoman intellectual climate.²² This does not mean, however, that all leaders of the nationalist movement were as radical as Mustafa Kemal in their approach to the Ottoman legacy. Once a rift developed between the Istanbul government and the nationalists in Ankara, Kemal concluded that the existence of two centres of authority, each claiming to be the legitimate representative of the Turkish people, was bound to complicate the nationalists' effort to achieve their

²¹ Shaw and Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 373–95.

²² Roderic H. Davison, *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History, 1774–1923*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990, pp. 243–64.

goals. Although the elimination of the sultanate, the transfer of the capital to Ankara, and the declaration of the republic were all accompanied by the GNA's commitment to the preservation of the caliphate, it is clear that Kemal, more than any of his colleagues, was beginning to have doubts about the position of the ancient Islamic institution in the new state. The specific circumstances surrounding the abolition of the caliphate have been debated since.²³ It is clear, however, that the decision made by the GNA on 3 March 1924 had a local as well as broader context.

On the local level the incident that is widely recalled as having set off the move to abolish the caliphate is related to an Indian Muslim letter sent to the Turkish Prime Minister, Ismet Pasha. Pan-Islamic sentiments had been on the rise among Indian Muslims since the late nineteenth century. In 1919, as the First World War ended with the destructive defeat of the Ottoman empire, Indian pan-Islamic leaders organized a Khilafat (Caliphate) Conference, out of which an All-India Khilafat Committee was set up.²⁴ The Khilafat was a religio-political mass movement, joined not only by Sunni Muslim leaders and activists, the obvious supporters of the ancient Islamic institution, but also by Shi'i and Isma'ili Indian figures, who were not necessarily committed to allegiance to the Ottoman caliphate. What united them may have been the desire to seize the opportunity to organize Muslims in India and affirm their identity. On 24 November 1923 three of Istanbul's daily papers published the text of a letter to Ismet Pasha, signed by two Indian Muslim leaders, the Aga Khan (Isma'ili; 1877–1957) and Amir Ali (Shi'ite; 1849–1928). Written apparently on behalf of the Khilafat Movement, the letter indicated that the separation of the caliphate from the sultanate had increased its significance for the Muslims in general, and urged the Turkish government to place the caliphate 'on a basis which would command the confidence and esteem of the Muslim nations, and thus impart to the Turkish state unique strength and dignity'.²⁵ Since the letter was published before reaching the Prime Minister, government circles in Ankara believed that the writers of the letter had leaked it in an attempt to pressur-

²³ For an overview of the debate see Hamid Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought*, London: Macmillan, 1982, pp. 52–68.

²⁴ On the Khilafat Movement see Jacob M. Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990, pp. 203–15.

²⁵ Arnold J. Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs, 1925*, London: Oxford University Press, 1927, p. 597; Lewis, *The Emergence*, p. 258; Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought*, p. 54.

ize the republican government. In response, the Turkish government used the sectarian background of the two signatories to discredit the letter in the eyes of the Turkish people, the great majority of whom were Sunni Muslims, while Mustafa Kemal launched a stinging attack on the Caliph.

Significant as it is, the Indian Muslim letter episode was not the only factor behind the move against the caliphate. During the months following the declaration of the republic relations within the nationalist camp deteriorated considerably. Critical colleagues, including Husayn Rauf, Refet Bele, Ali Fuat and Kazim Karabekir, as well as opposition circles in Istanbul, saw the declaration of the republic and Kemal's assumption of the presidency as a further step towards the establishment of authoritarian rule revolving around the Ghazi. In an Istanbul press interview published on 31 October 1923 Husayn Rauf was reported to have said that 'it would not be right to consider the question by putting emphasis on the word republic ... the most suitable system of government is the one that can best secure the welfare and independence of our nation and preserve the integrity of our dear country'.²⁶ Husayn Rauf's comments were understood in Ankara as anti-republican, and he was subsequently forced to appear before a People's Party meeting to explain himself. At the same time Kazim Karabekir arrived in Istanbul to assume his responsibilities as the new inspector of the first army. On 12 November Karabekir was received by the Caliph; three days later the Caliph received Husayn Rauf and Adnan (Adivar), the first representative of the nationalist government in Istanbul. On the same day, 15 November, as rumours circulated that Abdülmecit was going to abdicate, the president of the Istanbul Bar Association published an open letter in the Istanbul paper *Tanin*, appealing to the Caliph to remain in his post at whatever cost to his personal safety.²⁷ The Indian Muslim letter, therefore, was published amid an intense atmosphere of mutual suspicion and paranoia,²⁸ as the Kemalist circles seemed to believe that the Caliph had allowed himself to be used in the internal struggle for power.

The final straw came from the Caliph himself. On 22 January 1924 İsmet reported to Mustafa Kemal, who was then resting at İzmir after being diag-

²⁶ Atatürk, *The Great Speech*, p. 654.

²⁷ Berkes, *The Development of Secularism*, pp. 457–8; Mango, *Atatürk*, p. 399.

²⁸ Later, Kazim Karabekir claimed that many in Ankara believed that he was in Istanbul preparing to lead an army into Anatolia to take over the new capital: Kazim Karabekir, *Kazim Karabekir Anlatıyor*, ed. Uğur Mamcu, Istanbul: Tekin, 1990, pp. 121–2.

nosed with heart trouble, that the Caliph's first secretary had contacted the government, expressing displeasure at the attacks on his person in the press and the apparent decision by the government to preclude officials visiting Istanbul from seeking audience with him. The Caliph also asked the government to send the funds he had been earlier promised to cover the expenses of his office.²⁹ Replying to his Prime Minister, Kemal drew Ismet's attention to the increasing signs that Abdulmecit was in effect behaving like a sultan, rather than a caliph with symbolic religious powers, and advised him to respond to the Caliph's complaints in the harshest possible terms. In February, as he accompanied Marshal Fevzi (Çakmak) in supervising military manoeuvres in Izmir, Kemal sent for Ismet and the Defence Minister Kazim Pasha (Özlap) to join them. It was some time in February that Kemal convinced his loyal colleagues that it was high time to remove the caliphate once and for all. Recounting the events leading to the decision in his 1927 speech, Kemal made no mention of General Kazim Karabekir, who was also present at the military exercises.³⁰ Since the caliphate was certainly viewed by Kemal and his loyalists from the perspective of the power struggle within the new regime, Karabekir was obviously not to be party to the deliberations. The truth is that if Kemal's leading opponents were developing a plot with the aim of using the Caliph's authority to remove Kemal from power, they were certainly too late. For once the termination of the sultanate was agreed upon, a power vacuum in the new state was left unfilled. The idea of a collective leadership, or a GNA vested with legislative and executive powers, was certainly unsustainable, and was bound not to continue for long anyway.

Kemal and his companions returned on 23 February to Ankara, where he started to prepare the parliamentary group of the People's Party for the momentous resolutions. On 1 March Mustafa Kemal opened a new session of the GNA. In his speech he emphasized several points, among which was that 'it is indispensable, in order to secure the revival of the Islamic faith, to disengage it from the condition of being a political instrument, which it has been for centuries through habit'.³¹ What Kemal really meant by this was to be clarified the next day at a meeting of the ruling People's Party. Proposals submitted to the meeting by the President were discussed and agreed

²⁹ Atatürk, *The Great Speech*, p. 673.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 675.

³¹ Ibid., p. 676.

upon, and on 3 March were presented to the GNA. In the light of the overwhelming majority that Kemal's supporters enjoyed in the People's Party and the Assembly, the motions were approved with no significant objection. These historical pieces of legislation provided for the abolition of the caliphate, deposition of the Caliph, and the banishment of all members of the Ottoman house from Turkish territories, in addition to the abolition of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Awqaf and placing of all forms of education in the country under the state's authority.³² The next day Abdulmecit, the last of the Ottoman caliphs, was escorted in a humiliating manner to the railway station and put on an Orient Express train heading for Paris and permanent exile.

These decisions together, and not the abolition of the caliphate on its own, represented a turning point in modern Islamic political thought, and were to lay the foundations for the Turkish secularist system of government.³³ But while the secular meaning of the GNA's 3 March resolutions has always been noted, their implications for the making of the modern Turkish nation-state seem to have been overlooked. This is where the broader context of the abolition of the caliphate should be taken into account.

The Ottoman defeat in the war left Kemal and other leaders of the nationalist movement struggling to protect the remains of the empire in Anatolia and Rumelia, largely dominated by Turkish-speaking inhabitants. The imagined Turkishness of the emerging state, enhanced during the war years by the deportation of the Armenian population from Anatolia, was reaffirmed by the mass population exchange with Greece at the end of the war of liberation. This development provided Kemal with the opportunity to cultivate Turkish nationalist sentiments, fed with the growing perception of a homogeneous state that would no longer succumb to the sectarian and ethnic strife that characterized the empire in its final decades. He therefore instructed Ismet Pasha, who led the Turkish delegation to Lausanne, to assure the allies that the Ankara government favoured the creation of a Turkish national state, free from outside interference and disinclined to

³² C.A. Nalino, 'La fine del così ditto califato ottomano', *Orient Moderno*, 4 (1924), 137–53; Lewis, *The Emergence*, pp. 258–9; Ahmad 'Abd al-Rahim Mustafa, *Fi usul al-tarikh al-uthmani*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 1986, pp. 313–14.

³³ Berkes, *The Development of Secularism*, p. 461; Lewis, *The Emergence*, p. 259; Feroz Ahmad, 'Politics and Islam in Modern Turkey', in his *From Empire to Republic: Essays on the Late Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Istanbul: Bilgi University Press, 2008, vol. II, 303–31, esp. p. 309.

embark on foreign adventures.³⁴ It is important to note, nonetheless, that the implicit criterion of Turkishness and the assumed homogeneous citizenry of the new state was still a religious not secular one, despite the assertive secularization that the abolition of the caliphate entailed. In the concrete reality of the new state, of which a soldier who fought on almost all fronts of the empire, such as Mustafa Kemal, was certainly aware, the people of Turkey were descended from various ethnic stocks and not all were yet speaking a standard Turkish language. Being Muslim was the most fundamental and common factor that united them. The nationalist government, therefore, hesitated in encouraging the immigration of Turkish-speaking Christian Gagavuz of Bessarabia (then part of Romania) to the new state, and did not oppose the departure of the Turkish-speaking Christian Karamanlis from Anatolia. In contrast, it did accept the Greek-speaking Muslim Cretans, and the Slav-speaking Muslim Bosnians and Pomaks of the Balkans.³⁵ Not until the early 1930s did the People's Party and the republican state begin constructing a secular, linguistic-ethnic discourse of nationalism.

This vision of a modern, territorial, national state was not only aimed at placating the European allies, but was also a strategic choice on behalf of the nationalist leadership, reached through a careful understanding of the limitations imposed on history by the balance of power in the modern world. From the late nineteenth century onward three main views dominated Ottoman political thought: pan-Islamism, pan-Turkism, and Turkish nationalism.³⁶ The realities of the post-First World War world, where the Turkish heartland was surrounded by the Soviet Union, traditionally hostile Balkan states, and British and French colonial forces in Iraq and Syria, made the pursuit of pan-Islamic and pan-Turkish policies virtually impos-

³⁴ Palmer, *Decline and Fall*, p. 262. The genesis of the concept of territoriality goes back to the Erzurum Congress of the nationalist movement, July–August 1919: Atatürk, *The Great Speech*, pp. 49–50; Shaw and Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 344–5; Ali Kazancigil, 'The Ottoman–Turkish State and Kemalism', in Ali Kazancigil and Ergun Özbudun (eds), *Atatürk: Founder of a Modern State*, London: Hurst & Co., 1981, 37–56, esp. p. 51.

³⁵ Kemal H. Karpat, 'Modern Turkey', in P.M. Holt, Ann K.S. Lambton and Bernard Lewis (eds), *The Cambridge History of Islam*, Cambridge University Press, 1970, vol. IB, 527–65, esp. p. 563.

³⁶ Serif Mardin, 'Patriotism and Nationalism in Turkey', in Roger Michener (ed.), *Nationality, Patriotism and Nationalism in Liberal Democratic Societies*, St Paul, Minn.: Paragon House, 1993, 191–222.

THE ABOLITION OF THE CALIPHATE IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

sible. What remained were Turkish nationalism and the safeguarding of the new borders.

Ultimately, once the sultanate was abolished and the republic was declared, the caliphate became an anomaly. The caliph's position in, and relation to, the emerging national state was never clearly defined; and although the period of history during which all Muslims had lived under one caliphate was relatively short, Muslims at the time could never really comprehend a pope-like caliph. Furthermore, with its inherent extraterritorial dimensions, the institution of the caliphate was in total contradiction to the conception of the state that was being implemented in the Turkish republic.³⁷ From the point of view of its creators the modern Turkish state could no longer shoulder the responsibilities that the caliphate implied. Repeatedly, Mustafa Kemal would speak of the caliphate as a burden, not the privilege that perhaps many other Muslims saw.

REACTIONS AND FAILED ATTEMPTS AT RESURRECTION

Neither in Turkey nor in the Muslim world at large could the abolition of the caliphate pass without repercussions. Notwithstanding its turbulent history the caliphate, whether as an institution or as an imagined focus of the community, had long been intertwined with perceptions of the faith and its order of the world. Even before the GNA declared its decision, the uncertain future of the Ottoman caliphate had already provoked strong reactions from Muslim scholars and public figures. During the few years following the demise of the caliphate reactions to the momentous decision were manifested in various expressions, political and other.

Unsurprisingly, reactions within Turkey were noticeably limited, confused, and short-lived. A riot erupted in the small Mediterranean town of Silifke and another one in the Anatolian city of Bursa.³⁸ In November 1924 thirty-two deputies, led by Husayn Rauf, the former GNA prime minister, left the People's Party and formed the Progressive Republican Party. Leaders of the new party included Generals Ali Fuat, Refet (Bele), and Kazim Karabekir. But although all had expressed sympathy with the last Caliph and

³⁷ Remarks made by Mustafa Kemal (quoted in Nalino, 'La fine del così ditto califato ottomano', pp. 141–2), just before the abolition of the caliphate, illustrate that he became aware of these contradictions.

³⁸ Mango, *Atatürk*, p. 408.

resented the way in which Mustafa Kemal was concentrating power in his hands, the programme of the Progressive Republican Party called for a more liberal order and made no mention of the caliphate.³⁹ More serious was the outbreak of a rebellion in the Kurdish-dominated region in February 1925, led by Shaykh Sait of Palu, an influential member of the Naqshbandi *tariqa*. Although the nature of Shaykh Sait's rebellion is still a matter of debate, it does seem that the movement had a dual character, whereby its leaders sought a kind of independent Kurdistan and the followers were motivated by religious sentiments, demanding the return of *shari'a* law and the caliphate.⁴⁰ The rebellion, however, was quickly and harshly suppressed by government forces, ending in the sentencing of Shaykh Sait and other rebels to death. The truth is that after two destructive and draining wars the people of Turkey were too worn out to stand up for an institution that had become increasingly irrelevant to their lives.

Outside Turkey, consequences of the abolition of the caliphate were multi-dimensional, sometimes emotional, but mainly ineffective, reflecting the loss of consensus that characterized the intellectual and political landscape in the Muslim world, the rising force of nationalism, and the persistence of non-historical perceptions of the caliphate and its role and place in Islamic history.

Upon the abolition of the caliphate a sort of scramble for succession began in earnest, the most important episodes of which involved King Husayn of the Hijaz (formerly the Sharif of Mecca; d. 1931), and King Fuad I of Egypt.⁴¹ Husayn, who had an earlier claim to the caliphate, going back to his alliance with the British against his Ottoman masters in Istanbul during the First World War, received the news of the Turkish resolution

³⁹ Erik J. Zürcher, *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic: The Progressive Republican Party, 1924–1925*, Leiden: Brill, 1991; Feroz Ahmad, 'The Progressive Republican Party, 1924–1925', in his *From Empire to Republic: Essays on the Late Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Istanbul: Bilgi University Press, 2008, vol. II, 239–60.

⁴⁰ For more details see Robert Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Sait Rebellion, 1880–1925*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989.

⁴¹ The other known aspirant to the caliphate was King Amanullah Khan of Afghanistan. See H.A.R. Gibb, *Whither Islam? A Survey of Modern Movements in the Muslim World*, London: Victor Gollancz, 1932, p. 169. For the Muslim reactions in South-East Asia see A.C. Milner, 'The Impact of the Turkish Revolution on Malay', *Archipel*, 31 (1986), 117–27; Martin van Bruinessen, 'Muslims of the Dutch East Indies and the Caliphate Question', *Studia Islamica*, 2, 3 (1995), 126–39.

while on a visit to his son Abdallah, the Amir of Trans-Jordan (d. 1951). Abdallah, a political operator par excellence, encouraged his father to seize the moment and make a bid for the prestigious title. In Greater Syria Abdallah prompted pro-Hashemite elements to organize a campaign of support for Husayn, calling on him to assume the vacated position and declaring their allegiance to him as caliph. At the same time Hijazi dignitaries were summoned to the government building in Jedda, where the King's deputy informed them that His Majesty had accepted the responsibility of the caliphate. In Iraq, however, recognition of Husayn's caliphate was delayed until mid-March at the orders of his other, more cautious son King Faysal I (d. 1933).⁴² In reality, Husayn's image in the Muslim world had already been tarnished by his alliance with Britain, betrayal of the Ottoman government, and failure to achieve Arab independence and unity. His bid for the caliphate therefore attracted more criticism, especially in Egypt and India, than support.

Back in the Hijaz, Husayn attempted to bolster his position by appointing a thirty-one-member caliphate advisory council, and calling for a caliphate congress to be held in Mecca. The congress did eventually meet during the *hajj* season in July 1924 but, lacking broad Muslim interest and riddled with differences, it concluded its proceedings with a declaration that avoided even the mere mention of the caliphate.⁴³ Not more than a year later, as he proved unable to check the Saudi expansion, Husayn abdicated and left the Hijaz for exile.⁴⁴ His bid for the caliphate was subsequently extinguished, once and for all.

In Egypt, only four days after the abolition of the caliphate, sixteen Azhari scholars published a statement declaring the Turkish move null and void, and asserting that the existence of a caliph is a vital requirement for the Muslim community world-wide. The Azhari *'ulama* also called for the holding of an Islamic congress to resolve the caliphate question according to Islamic precepts.⁴⁵ It is not clear whether the intervention of Azhari *'ulama* was encouraged by the palace officials or whether Fuad's caliphal

⁴² Basheer M. Nafi, *Arabism, Islamism and the Palestine Question, 1909–1941*, Reading: Ithaca Press, 1998, pp. 97–8.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 98; Martin Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1986, pp. 80–5.

⁴⁴ Talib Muhammad Wahim, *Mamlakat al-Hijaz, 1916–1925*, Basra: Basra University Press, 1982, pp. 343–404.

⁴⁵ *Al-Ahram*, 6 March 1924 (s.v. 'Khal' al-Khalifa Ghayr Shar'i').

ambitions were nurtured by al-Azhar's move. What is certain is that once the idea of a caliphate congress was formalized King Fuad became the main source of financial support for the Azhari-led congress preparatory committee, and his candidacy for the caliphate became the implicit aim of the projected congress. Given the position and weight of Egypt, Fuad believed that he was more qualified to fill the vacant position of caliph than any of the other aspiring Muslim rulers, and given al-Azhar's prestige as the historic seat of Islamic learning, many senior *ʿulama* in Egypt believed that only al-Azhar could resolve the caliphate issue. Azhari *ʿulama* therefore launched an uncompromising attack on King Husayn's claim to the caliphate, accusing him of being a British pawn.⁴⁶

The congress was initially planned to meet in March 1925, but fierce opposition to Fuad's candidacy both inside and outside Egypt led to repeated postponement. Opponents of the congress varied in their views, from those who saw British control of Egyptian affairs as undermining the credentials of the King in assuming such a solemn responsibility on behalf of the entire Muslim community to those who feared that the acquisition of the caliphate would consolidate the King's already authoritarian powers. There were also objections to the congress by the government of Turkey, the Saudi king of Najd and the Hijaz, and colonial administrations in various parts of the Muslim world.⁴⁷ When the congress was finally held at Cairo in May 1926 only thirty-nine Muslim delegates attended, a large number of whom were Egyptians, although hundreds of invitations had been sent out to the Muslim countries by the preparatory committee. Disagreements among the delegates over the powers of the caliph and the situation in the Muslim world, coupled with the extremely limited scope of representation, made it impossible for the congress to elect a caliph.⁴⁸ The congress's resolution to meet again a year later came to nothing.

Two other pan-Islamic congresses were held during this period: the first was the Congress of the Muslim World, convened in Mecca between 7 June and 5 July 1926, and the second was the Jerusalem General Islamic Congress of December 1931. Although both were pan-Islamic in character, and

⁴⁶ *Al-Ahram*, 10 and 12 March 1924; Husayn, *al-Itijahat al-wataniyya*, vol. II, p. 49.

⁴⁷ Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs, 1925*, vol. I: *the Islamic World Since the Peace Conference*, pp. 81–91; Husayn, *al-Itijahat al-wataniyya*, vol. II, pp. 51–3; Nafi, *Arabism*, pp. 99–100.

⁴⁸ Landau, *The Politics*, pp. 237–8; Husayn, *al-Itijahat al-wataniyya*, vol. II, p. 54; Nafi, *Arabism*, pp. 100–1.

were well attended, and both were to reignite the debate about the caliphate, neither was in fact intended to discuss the issue.⁴⁹ The first congress was called for by King 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Sa'ud to alleviate Muslim concerns about his newly established rule in the holy places of the Hijaz, and the second was organized by the mufti of Jerusalem to rally Arab Islamic support for the Palestinian people in the intensified struggle over the future of Palestine. No other similar effort was ever to be undertaken for the revival of the caliphate. An attempt by the grand shaykh of al-Azhar, Shaykh Muhammad Mustafa al-Maraghi (d. 1945), to reopen the caliphate issue by promoting the chances of King Faruq⁵⁰ was only hinted at and never took formal shape.

No less interesting in the Muslim reaction to the fall of the caliphate was the heated intellectual debate that the Turkish decision engendered, especially in Egypt. In fact, the debate started immediately after the GNA declared the separation of the caliphate from the sultanate and the termination of the latter in the autumn of 1922.

The first contribution to the debate was that of the eminent Muslim reformist Sayyid Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865–1935). Sensing the ominous signs emanating from Ankara, Rida wrote a series of articles in his periodical *al-Manar*, published later in book form.⁵¹ Rida's tract discusses various aspects of the caliphate issue, including the Islamic juridical bases of the caliphate, the relationship between the caliphate and the *shari'a*, the history of the institution, and the recent political competition for the caliphate. Broadly speaking, Rida's views of the caliphate question were markedly linked to his Islamic reformist convictions. Critical of the shift in the position and function of the caliphate after the end of the Medinan period, Rida emphasized the value of *shura* (consultation) in the Islamic polity and condemned the Turkish republican onslaught on the caliphate as an institution, but avoided defending the person of the Ottoman caliph. Like most

⁴⁹ On both see Nafi, *Arabism*, pp. 101–27; Landau, *The Politics*, pp. 238–42.

⁵⁰ Elie Kedourie, *The Chatham House Version and other Middle-Eastern Studies*, London: Praeger, 1970, pp. 203–5.

⁵¹ M. Rashid Rida, *al-Khilafa wa'l-imama al-'uzma*, Cairo: Matba'at al-Manar, 1341 AH. The articles collected in the book were first published in his own journal, *al-Manar*, vols. 23 and 24, 1922–3, the last in *al-Manar*, 24, 6 (Ramadan 1341/May 1923), 549–65. See also Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, London: Oxford University Press, 1962, pp. 240–3; Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought*, pp. 69–82.

other figures of the early generation of the Arab Islamic reform movement Rida linked the viability of the caliphate, the supremacy of the *shari'a*, and the revival of Islam, and saw that the future of the caliphate was contingent upon a project of cooperation and understanding between Arabs and Turks, framed by Muslim reformists.

A few months after the publishing of Rida's book a former Lebanese Ottoman official translated and published a Turkish work on the caliphate. Published anonymously, *al-Khilafa wa sultat al-umma* was apparently written by a group of Kemalist scholars, and sanctioned by the Kemalist wing of the GNA, with the aim of justifying the abolition of the sultanate and turning the caliphate into a symbolic institution. Although drawing heavily on Islamic classical sources of jurisprudence and political theory to substantiate its perspective of justice, expediency, public interest, and good religion, the Turkish document is riddled with contradictions.⁵² Unable to set a definitive goal for their work, its anonymous authors attempted to explain the demotion of the caliphate by asserting the sovereignty of the nation and its right to choose the form of its polity, and arguing against the very legitimacy of the caliphate in post-Medinan times, without fully explaining why the caliphate should have been retained after the removal of the sultanate.

Shortly after the abolition of the caliphate Shaykh Mustafa Sabri (1869–1945), the last *shaykh al-islam* of the Ottoman empire, who had left Istanbul for exile in Egypt after the abolition of the sultanate and the position of *shaykh al-islam* in 1922, published his *al-Nakir 'ala munkiri al-ni'ma*. Completed before the abolition decision was made, Sabri's book mentioned the fate of the caliphate very briefly at the conclusion of his work, only as an additional proof for the arguments already advanced in the book. Written in the form of the classical genre of *amali* literature, where one discusses a variety of related and not necessarily related themes, Sabri's work is an incoherently written, virulent attack on the Kemalists and their evolving vision for post-Ottoman Turkey. Still bitter at the Arab—and especially Egyptian—praise of Mustafa Kemal's struggle for the liberation of Turkey from foreign occupation, Sabri presents the Kemalists as decadents, Turkish chauvinists who colluded with the British against Islam and the caliphate,

⁵² 'Califate et souveraineté nationale', *Revue du Monde Musulman*, 59 (1925), 3–81. For a fairly detailed review of the Arabic version see Husayn, *al-Itijahat al-wataniyya*, vol. II, pp. 68–73. See also Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, pp. 183–4; Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought*, pp. 55–6.

and Mustafa Kemal as a concealed Jew. Although the caliphate is not the main focus of the book, Sabri defends the last Sultan/Caliph and describes the separation of the Turkish government from the caliphate as a premeditated step on the part of the Kemalists to establish a non-Islamic government in Turkey.⁵³

However, the work that came to encapsulate the entire Muslim debate about the caliphate was a pro-abolitionist book, written not by a Kemalist Turk but an Egyptian Azhari scholar and *shari'a* court judge, drawing on considerable knowledge of classical Islamic sources and modern Orientalist studies of Islam. Although *al-Islam wa usul al-hukm* by Shaykh 'Ali 'Abd al-Raziq (d. 1966) is obviously influenced by *al-Khilafa wa sultat al-umma*, 'Abd al-Raziq's is a more coherent and strongly formulated book.⁵⁴ In contrast to the Kemalist tract, 'Abd al-Raziq's work is not distracted by attempts to justify a caliphate without state power, but rather revolves around a simple and definitive principle: that the caliphate was not a religiously derived institution, but simply a utilitarian system of government that served a specific period of history, and that neither Islamic historical precedents nor the *shari'a* precluded modern Muslims from adopting different forms of government. In the highly charged atmosphere enveloping Sunni Muslim opinion at the time, 'Abd al-Raziq's contribution to the debate aroused heated responses in Egypt and elsewhere in the Muslim world, leading to his exclusion from the *'ulama's* ranks by an Azhari tribunal, a very rare occurrence in the history of al-Azhar.⁵⁵ Later assessments of the 'Abd al-Raziq affair as the first shot in the liberal-conservative conflict over Egypt's soul seem to be highly exaggerated. The truth was perhaps less dramatic. A son of an Egyptian landed family, with strong connections to the Liberal-Constitutionalist Party, 'Abd al-Raziq was fundamentally concerned with the king's constitutional role in the Egyptian state—where it was feared that the authoritarian Fuad I would seek to bolster his authority by aspiring to the caliphate—rather than with the caliphate question as such.

Gradually, as the politics of the caliphate waned in the 1930s and 1940s, the ideological debate that accompanied it receded to a point of non-existence. Neither in the programmes of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt nor

⁵³ Sabri, *al-Nakir 'ala munkiri al-ni'ma min al-din wa'l-khilafa wa'l-umma*, p. 23. See also Husayn, *al-Itijahat al-wataniyya*, vol. II, pp. 74–85, esp. p. 81.

⁵⁴ 'Ali 'Abd al-Raziq, *al-Islam wa usul al-hukm*, Cairo: Matba'at Misr, 1925.

⁵⁵ Jean-Paul Roux, *L'Islam en Asie*, Paris: Payot, 1958, pp. 86–98; Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, pp. 184–92; Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought*, pp. 62–8.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

in those of the Jama'at-i Islami of India and Pakistan—the two most powerful Islamic political forces of the twentieth century—did the caliphate feature very prominently. That does not mean that the caliphate question disappeared entirely from Muslims' vision of their future. The caliphate, in fact, occupies a central position in the vision of Hizb al-Tahrir, another Islamic political party, founded by Taqi al-Din al-Nabhani (1909–77) in 1953.⁵⁶ But Hizb al-Tahrir has always been regarded as a marginal force in Muslim societies where it is believed to be active, and has never succeeded in leaving a tangible impact on the shaping of modern Islamic political thought.

CONCLUSIONS

The fall of the caliphate and its political and ideological repercussions involved a large number of actors, starting with Mustafa Kemal, Sharif Husayn of Mecca and King Fuad of Egypt, and continuing with Shaykh 'Ali 'Abd al-Raziq. A few of them came to play their roles from already formed ideological convictions. To a great extent their contributions were the product of a specific historical context, in times where Muslims were largely overwhelmed with a profound sense of crisis and retreat. In his career as an Ottoman army officer Mustafa Kemal was a loyal soldier, committed to the welfare of the empire and the safeguarding of its territories. As head of the new Turkish state, however, he was forced to confront the reality of power in a modern centralized state, in which the caliphate seemed to become not only a burden but also a political threat. Similarly, 'Ali 'Abd al-Raziq, the Azhari scholar who emerged to epitomize the ideological counterpart of Mustafa Kemal, descended from a well-entrenched family and was originally a student of the Arab Islamic reform movement. He was not a rebel in the making and did not seek to be one. What drove him to espouse the abolitionist view was most probably the contentious debate about the constitutional foundations of modern Egypt, not the legitimacy of Kemal's republic.

On the other hand, until his appointment to his position by Sultan Abdülmid II in 1909 Sharif Husayn of Mecca was known for his conservative attitudes and loyalty to Istanbul. Fearing the reach of the Unionist government's centralization policies, he turned into a patriarchal champion

⁵⁶ For a study of Hizb al-Tahrir see Suha Taji-Farouki, *A Fundamental Quest: Hizb al-Tahrir and the Search for Islamic Caliphate*, London: Grey Seal, 1996.

THE ABOLITION OF THE CALIPHATE IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

of Arab rights and an ally of the British during the unsettling years of the First World War, without which his aspiration for the caliphate would have never surfaced in the first place. Nor was there anything in Fuad's background to make him a candidate for the caliphate. A wandering prince of the Khedival family, he was not known to have any form of association with pan-Islamic circles, either in Egypt or in Istanbul. Even his rise to the throne of Egypt was an unexpected accident of history. It was Egypt's consciousness of its weight and position, and its search for a role and identity, that nurtured his ambitions for the caliphate.

The caliphate, of course, was not to be restored in any shape, effective or symbolic. It is not clear yet whether Muslims across the world have finally been reconciled with the reality of the nation-state. With the constant restiveness in Muslim political culture it seems that the modern nation-state still suffers from a legitimacy deficit. Yet only a few Muslims can deny the potent power of the idea of the nation. Although neither Mustafa Kemal's vision of nation and state nor 'Abd al-Raziq's questioning of the religious bases of the caliphate was popular at the time, it was the state established by Kemal and the vision advanced by 'Abd al-Raziq that eventually triumphed. Muslims still hold a palpable affinity to an imagined pan-Islamic community, repeatedly expressed in times of war and crisis; but the reality they live, interact with, and struggle for or against is that of a territorial, national state. Even in the Arab world, where the forces of transnational unity still have considerable strength, it is Arab national unity to which the Arab masses aspire. A power-holding or symbolic caliph is not on the agenda of any influential political force or state.

In a way, pan-Islamic affinities have been manifested in formal, organized bodies, the most important of which are the Muslim World League (MWL, Rabitat al-'Alam al-Islami), and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).⁵⁷ The MWL was founded in Mecca in 1962 as a non-governmental body, composed of *ulama*, Islamic public figures, and even political activists, and is exclusively financed and largely controlled by the Saudi government. On the other hand, the OIC is an official body of the Muslim states, with a permanent secretariat in the Saudi city of Jedda. Founded at a Muslim summit meeting in 1969 that was called after the partial burning of Jerusalem's al-Aqsa mosque by a fanatical Australian Jew, the OIC holds a summit meeting of the heads of Muslim states every three years, and under-

⁵⁷ Landau, *The Politics*, pp. 283–95.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

takes other projects in fields of cultural, political, and economic cooperation among Muslim countries. Yet neither the MWL nor the OIC is seen as an effective body, and substantive progress in relations between Muslim countries is largely accomplished on a bilateral or regional basis.

SOUTH ASIAN ISLAM AND THE IDEA OF THE CALIPHATE

Muhammad Qasim Zaman

In the immediate aftermath of the First World War colonial South Asia witnessed a large-scale effort at Muslim political mobilization—the Khilafat Movement—aimed at preventing the dismemberment of the Ottoman caliphate at the hands of the victorious Allied powers. Though the movement failed in its professed goals, it contributed significantly to the growth of an anti-colonial political culture in India even as it helped make diverse new groups part of Indian politics.¹ Its effusive religious rhetoric and the idea that Muslims needed some sort of a religious and political ‘centre’ to be able to preserve their collective identity would also play a significant role in shaping later demands for a separate Muslim homeland.² Early constitutional debates following the establishment of Pakistan were, for their part, informed by classical conceptions of the caliphate. In contemporary India

¹ Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1982, esp. pp. 210–11.

² The need for a political and religious center was underlined, among others, by Abu 'l-Kalam Azad in his *Mas'ala-yi khilafat wa jazira-i 'arab*, Calcutta: All India Khilafat Committee, 1920, pp. 24, 26, 119ff., though he was speaking here of the greater Muslim world rather than India. In subsequent years he would emerge as one of the most articulate *opponents* of the demands for a separate Muslim homeland in India.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

the Student Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), a radical offshoot of the Indian Jama'at-i Islami, has also called for the reinstitution of the caliphate, as has a prominent sectarian organization in Pakistan.³ Beyond such instances, however, the idea of the caliphate has not had any great resonance in modern South Asia. The Muslims of India have, for the most part, seen the promises of a secular state as the best hope for the preservation of their culture and identity. And it is the idea of the Islamic state, rather than specifically of the 'caliphate', that has tended to galvanize religio-political groups in Pakistan.

Yet the caliphate has scarcely been absent from South Asian Muslim discourses. It has figured in wide-ranging debates on Islamic legal reform, the Islamic state, and matters of religious authority. There are those who do, in some fashion, wish to see the institution revived; but, as I will try to show in this chapter, the manner in which references to the caliphate figure in political and religious argument—and their relevance to an understanding of trends in modern Islamic thought—go far beyond the question of the caliphate itself.

IQBAL, LEGAL REFORM, AND THE CALIPHATE

I begin with the modernist poet and philosopher Muhammad Iqbal (d. 1938) and a famous lecture he delivered on *ijtihad*—the 'principle of movement in Islam', as he called it—in 1930. For all the severe misgivings many Indian Muslims had about the decision of the Turkish Grand National Assembly to abolish the caliphate, Iqbal saw it as a legitimate exercise in forging a new *ijma'*, or consensus. To Iqbal, *ijma'* was 'perhaps the most important legal notion in Islam',⁴ yet one that, for too long, had remained 'a mere idea'. He believed that it ought to become a 'permanent legislative institution', the equivalent of a collectively undertaken *ijtihad*; and the Turkish case exemplified this:

The transfer of the power of Ijtihad from individual representatives of schools to a Muslim legislative assembly which, in view of the growth of opposing sects, is the only possible form *ijma'* can take in modern times, will secure contributions to legal

³ On SIMI see Irfan Ahmad, *Islamism and Democracy in India: The Transformation of the Jamaat-e-Islami*, Princeton University Press, 2009, esp. pp. 179–80, 183–4. On the Pakistani sectarian organization to which I refer see below.

⁴ Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Oxford University Press, 1934, p. 164.

discussion from laymen who happen to possess a keen insight into affairs. In this way alone, we can stir into activity the dormant spirit of life in our legal system, and give it an evolutionary outlook.⁵

As for the consensus of the earlier generations, and even that of the Companions of the Prophet, Iqbal, not unlike the Egyptian reformer Muhammad 'Abduh (d. 1905) and his disciple Muhammad Rashid Rida (d. 1935), remained unimpressed with its binding authority.⁶ He recognized that making the legislative assembly the arena of *ijtihad* and of *ijma'* could lead to 'grave mistakes', for most legislators would know nothing about 'the subtleties of Mohammedan Law'. He sought to remedy this danger by having the *ulama* guide the legislative process, though the long-term solution he had in view was to reform the structure and content of legal education.⁷

While Iqbal's interest in what Malcolm Kerr would later characterize as the 'institutionalization of *ijma'*' is obvious, he was equally drawn to possibilities of legal change at the initiative of a caliph-like ruler. As he worked on his lecture on *ijtihad*, Iqbal had corresponded regularly with Sayyid Sulayman Nadwi (d. 1953), a distinguished scholar of Islam in late colonial India. This correspondence is incomplete in that we have only the letters Iqbal wrote to Nadwi, which Nadwi published later with some annotations. They do nonetheless provide us with some important indications of Iqbal's interest in the idea that early caliphs, notably the Prophet's second successor, 'Umar b. al-Khattab (r. 634–44), played an important role in the making of what later Sunni tradition would come to recognize as an authoritative consensus. In the form in which Iqbal took it up, the idea goes back to the eighteenth-century north Indian reformer Shah Wali Allah (d. 1762).⁸ Broadly speaking, it signified both that true consensus ought to be limited to what could be traced to Islam's first generations and that the caliphs were an important part of the process through which any such consensus was forged. Both implications could be drawn on to suggest, as Iqbal did, that the Turkish Grand National Assembly was within its rights to chart new paths—and, indeed, that as the rightful political authority in

⁵ Ibid., p. 165.

⁶ Ibid., p. 166.

⁷ Ibid., p. 167.

⁸ Shah Wali Allah, *Qurrat al-aynayn fi tafdil al-shaykhayn*, Lahore: al-Maktaba al-Salafiyya, 1976, pp. 171, 185. For a discussion of Wali Allah's ideas on *ijma'* to which I am much indebted see Mazhar Baqa, *Usul-i fiqh awr Shah Wali Allah*, Islamabad: Idara-i Tahqiqat-i Islami, 1973, pp. 287–327, esp. pp. 299–300, 309–11.

its own land it was engaged in the process of articulating a new consensus. As he put it in his lecture, whereas other Muslims were 'mechanically repeating old values', the Turks were 'on the way to creating new values'.⁹

Iqbal was likewise intrigued by the view, for which he drew explicitly on Wali Allah, that because the Prophet had had to take account of his particular milieu in instituting his norms and legal penalties, these should not be stringently imposed on later generations of Muslims.¹⁰ As his correspondence with Sulayman Nadwi makes clear, Iqbal had come upon this view in a theological work by Muhammad Shibli Nu'mani (d. 1914), one of the founders of the Nadwat al-'Ulama, a distinguished educational institution in northern India, and a teacher of Sulayman Nadwi. The view has radical implications. As Shibli Nu'mani had somewhat cryptically observed in sympathetically commenting on it, 'the extent to which the customs of the Arabs have been taken into account in case of the shari'ah's stipulated punishments for theft, adultery (*zina*), murder etc. becomes evident from this principle. So does the question of the extent to which these punishments should be literally (*bi-'ayniha awr bi-khususiha*) adhered to [by others].'¹¹ From the vantage point of this reading of Wali Allah, and with Iqbal's interest in the idea that the ruler could set aside particular norms on grounds of expediency, endorsing the Kemalist decision to do away with the caliphate looks like a less radical step than it might have seemed otherwise. In the same correspondence Iqbal had also discussed with Nadwi the question of whether 'the imam' of Sunni constitutional theory must necessarily be a single individual or if a group (*jama'at*) might conceivably also be designated as such.¹² Nadwi's response is not preserved, but, in his lecture on *ijtihad*, Iqbal explicitly endorses the view that the Turkish assembly should be seen as a legitimate stand-in for the defunct imam.¹³

⁹ Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, p. 154.

¹⁰ Iqbal to Sayyid Sulayman Nadwi (2, 22, and 28 September 1929), in Shaykh 'Ata Allah (ed.), *Iqbalnama*, 2 vols., Lahore: Shaykh Muhammad Ashraf, n.d., vol. I, pp. 160–3. Also see Shah Wali Allah, *Hujjat Allah al-baligha*, 2 vols., Cairo: Dar al-Turath, 1355 AH, vol. I, pp. 118–19.

¹¹ Muhammad Shibli Nu'mani, *al-Kalam, ya'ni 'ilm-i kalam-i jadid* (published together with Shibli Nu'mani's *al-Kalam*), 2 vols., Karachi: Mas'ud Publishing House, 1964, vol. II, pp. 237–8, commenting on Wali Allah, *Hujjat Allah*, vol. I, p. 118. Shibli Nu'mani's Urdu translation of a portion of Wali Allah's text is quoted in Iqbal's letter to Sulayman Nadwi (22 September 1929), 'Ata Allah, *Iqbalnama*, vol. I, pp. 161–2.

¹² 'Ata Allah, *Iqbalnama*, vol. I, pp. 149f.

¹³ Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, p. 149.

SOUTH ASIAN ISLAM AND THE IDEA OF THE CALIPHATE

THE *IMARAT-I SHAR'IYYA* IN COLONIAL INDIA

A very different response to questions relating to religious and political authority came in the 1920s from a group of scholars based in Bihar in eastern India. During the Khilafat Movement several prominent scholars had entertained the idea that the Muslims of India should establish a structure of religio-political authority in the country by having a prominent scholar recognized as the pre-eminent leader, the *amir-i shari'at* or the *imam al-Hind*. Abu 'l-Kalam Azad (d. 1958), a traditionally educated scholar and a prominent leader of the Khilafat Movement, was among the proponents of this idea.¹⁴ Though it did not come to fruition in this form, an important initiative in that direction soon materialized in the form of what has come to be known as the *imarat-i shar'iyya*. This is a network of unofficial judicial courts, the first of which were established in Bihar in 1921. In colonial India the *imarat-i shar'iyya* sought to deal with the problems created by the absence of *shari'a* judges, which had meant, as the *'ulama* saw it, that even those aspects of Islamic law that the colonial administration had allowed to remain in effect could not be properly administered. The judges of the *imarat-i shar'iyya*, who have continued to exist in post-colonial India, seek to provide alternative—*shari'a*-based—venues for Muslims for the settlement of their legal disputes. But the ambitions of the *imarat-i shar'iyya* go beyond the implementation of *shari'a* norms in matters of personal status laws, and this is what makes this venture relevant to the question of the caliphate.

As Abu 'l-Mahasin Sajjad (d. 1940), the guiding spirit behind this venture, had insisted, Islam was an eminently public religion, which meant that Muslims needed to have some form of a communal and, indeed political, organization to order their affairs. Not unlike his younger contemporary Sayyid Abu 'l-A'la Mawdudi (d. 1979), Sajjad argued furthermore that the only law that could provide a durable basis for social and political organization was God's law and Muslims were obligated to establish a system based on this law. Sajjad died before he could explain with any clarity precisely how a 'divine government'—*hukumat-i ilahi*, the title of his incomplete treatise on this subject—could be instituted, especially in conditions of colonial rule.¹⁵ What he seems to have had in mind is for a leading religious

¹⁴ Azad, *Mas'ala-yi khilafat*, pp. 147–51; Minault, *Khilafat Movement*, pp. 153–4.

¹⁵ For a brief introduction to Sajjad and his ideas see Ebrahim Moosa, 'Shari'at Governance in Colonial and Postcolonial India', in Barbara D. Metcalf (ed.), *Islam in South Asia in Practice*, Princeton University Press, 2009, pp. 317–25.

scholar to be accepted by the Muslims of India as a religio-political authority to oversee various aspects of their religious and public lives. The *imarat-i shari'yya* that he had helped found is indeed headed by an *amir*; Sajjad himself served as its deputy *amir*.

Although the functions of the *amir* and his deputies have tended to be restricted largely to overseeing the work of the *shari'a* courts, there seems to have been some disagreement among Sajjad's contemporaries on precisely how to think of the *imarat-i shari'yya* itself. In a preface to the first, posthumous edition of Sajjad's book *Minnat Allah Rahmani* (d. 1991)—who would later serve as the *amir-i shari'at*—explicitly equated this 'divine government' with the 'Islamic caliphate'. 'If complete power is acquired today,' he wrote in 1941, 'it would take just some additions for the *imarat-i shari'yya* to assume the form of an Islamic caliphate. Indeed, its structure is such that, with the acquisition of power, it cannot become anything but an Islamic caliphate.'¹⁶

A markedly different picture emerges from a short tract, 'The Problem of the Emirate' (*Mas'ala-yi imarat*) by 'Abd al-Samad Rahmani (d. 1973), a contemporary of Sajjad and, like him, a deputy *amir-i shari'at* of Bihar and Orissa. Writing in 1928—that is, during Sajjad's lifetime (though it was not published until 1940)—Rahmani was keen to distinguish the present and future *imarat-i shari'yya* in India from any aspirations to the caliphate. His main concern, however, was to refute those past and present scholars who posited political and coercive power as the prerequisite for the position of the *amir*.¹⁷

Rahmani argues, very much like Sajjad, that Muslims of India need to be organized as a community under a determinate structure of authority headed by an *amir*. This *amir* is what the Qur'an has in mind when it enjoins believers to 'obey God and the Messenger and those in authority among you' (Q 4:59).¹⁸ Rahmani insists, however, that the *amir* of whom he speaks here does not need to possess coercive power in order to have a

¹⁶ Minnat Allah Rahmani, 'Ard-i nashir', in Abu 'l-Mahasin Sajjad, *Hukumat-i ilahi*, ed. Mujahid al-Islam Qasimi, Patna: Imarat-i Shar'iyya, 1999, pp. 13–16, at p. 14. Also see Moosa, 'Shari'at Governance', pp. 319–20.

¹⁷ 'Abd al-Samad Rahmani, *Hindustan awr mas'ala-yi imarat*, Patna: Maktaba-yi imarat-i shari'yya, n.d. [1940].

¹⁸ This famous verse appears on the title page of Rahmani's *Mas'ala-yi imarat* and is invoked elsewhere: p. 136. Translations from the Qur'an follow M.A.S. Abdel Halceem, *The Qur'an: A New Translation*, Oxford University Press, 2004.

legitimate claim to his office. What matters is that he has been chosen by the people and enjoys their confidence. Coercive power has its uses, he says, but it is not essential to the *imarat*. Put differently, an *amir* is necessary for the proper upkeep of the community's affairs whether or not he enjoys effective political and coercive power. For Rahmani it is at this point that a contrast is to be observed between the caliphate, which needs coercive power, and the emirate, which does not. Yet Rahmani implies at times that even the caliphate can be legitimate without effective political and military authority at its disposal. This, incidentally, is a view that Abu 'l-Kalam Azad had explicitly refuted in his treatise in defence of the Ottoman caliphate,¹⁹ though that work was written at the height of the Khilafat Movement whereas Rahmani was writing some years after the collapse of the Ottoman caliphate and of the Indian movement in its support.

The next step is for Rahmani to argue that an *amir* is needed not only in the lands of Islam—that is, in predominantly Muslim societies—but also in the 'abode of war' or non-Muslim lands. If what is needed is a structure of authority rather than of coercive authority, then there is no reason why the former should only be restricted to predominantly Muslim lands. Rahmani refers several times in this short tract to the Qur'anic rendering of the biblical story of Saul and Goliath. According to the Qur'anic account (Q 2:246–51) the Children of Israel approached their prophet—identified by the exegetical tradition as Samuel—to have him request God to appoint a king (*malik*) so that they could fight in God's cause under his leadership. Saul was appointed as a result of this request. When the Children of Israel objected to this choice on the grounds that Saul was not a man of great wealth, Samuel had reminded them not only that 'God grants His authority to whomever He pleases' but also that God had given Saul 'great knowledge and stature', which is what qualified him for the position. Rahmani makes two points with reference to this passage. First, the fact that Saul's lack of material power and wealth did not disqualify him from leading the community means that the *amir* does not need to possess such things to be able to serve as the leader. To make it easier to arrive at this conclusion Rahmani understands the Qur'anic *malik* not as 'king' but as simply as leader (*amir*), which helps avoid any detailed argument on the permissibility of having a king who does not enjoy political power. Second, Rahmani argues that Saul's appointment as leader took place when the Children of Israel were

¹⁹ Azad, *Mas'ala-yi khilafat*, pp. 8–9, 26–7.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

under the rule of others, from which he concludes that a leadership structure is necessary not only when believers are on their own but also when they live in a land of unbelief and under foreign rule.

The story of Saul and Goliath was often understood in the medieval exegetical tradition as a story about *jihad*: Saul's troops, which include David, are victorious, Goliath is killed by David, and God grants David both 'sovereignty and wisdom'. Rahmani, however, sees this Qur'anic story as not primarily about *jihad* but rather about the need for community organization and authority. Everything depends on capacity, he says: if people have the capacity for war making and state formation, they should undertake such projects, but if they lack such capacities they are not thereby absolved of the obligation to set up a structure of authority. He concludes his tract by calling upon fellow *'ulama* to try to bridge their differences in order to help forge a unified structure of authority that Muslims desperately need in order to prosper.

In contrast to Minnat Allah Rahmani's aforementioned remark that it would not take much to turn the Bihar model of the *imarat-i shar'iyya* into a veritable caliphate, 'Abd al-Samad Rahmani seems keen to show how the *imarat-i shar'iyya*, as he envisions it, can be accommodated within colonial and other non-Muslim dispensations. This may have been meant not just as a pragmatic consideration but also as a way of assuaging the sort of suspicion that an appeal to the idea of a resurrected caliphate could generate among colonial officials in the aftermath of the Khilafat Movement. But Rahmani's position should also be seen as a critique of views at opposite ends of a spectrum: of those who held that until Muslims enjoyed political power there was no obligation to forge any religio-political organization; and of those at the other end, who argued that any effort at religio-political organization must necessarily aim at, and eventually lead to, the acquisition of coercive power.

THE CALIPHATE AND THE MUSLIM HOMELAND

The views set forth by 'Abd al-Samad Rahmani were broadly in accord with the way the Jam'iyyat al-'Ulama-i Hind, the Deobandi religio-political organization allied with the secular Indian National Congress, visualized Muslim collective life in post-colonial India. The leaders of the Jam'iyyat were guided by the assumption that Muslims would be able to enjoy full religious and cultural autonomy in an independent India and that their

religious leadership would be responsible for overseeing their affairs in a secular, democratic framework. Within this overall vision, the *imarat-i shar'iyya* has continued to provide and develop its network of Islamic judicial institutions. But the Muslim religious leadership has also sought to continue guarding the community and its legal norms against perceived encroachments by the secular state. Since the early 1970s the All India Muslim Personal Law Board has spearheaded resistance against efforts to replace the *shari'a*-based laws of personal status with a uniform civil code to which all citizens of India would be subject irrespective of their religion. Since the late 1980s an Islamic Fiqh Academy—which draws most of its leadership from Deobandi *'ulama* but has deep roots in the *imarat-i shar'iyya* as well—has sought to provide religious leadership to the community along lines not very different from what 'Abd al-Samad Rahmani may have had in mind in the late 1920s.

But even as *'ulama* associated with the Jam'iyyat al-'Ulama-i Hind were envisaging ways of establishing some sort of religio-political organization—and concomitant structures of religious authority—for the Muslim community, others in late colonial India busied themselves with working out blueprints of a full-fledged Islamic state. One such proposal, which has received little scholarly attention but which may have had some influence on *'ulama* circles in the soon-to-be-founded Muslim homeland, was the work of a religious scholar named Muhammad Ishaq Siddiqi Sandelawi Nadwi. Around 1940 the United Provinces branch of the All India Muslim League—the organization that would soon lead the demand for a separate Muslim homeland—established a committee to formulate a vision of what an Islamic state would look like. Members of the committee included the aforementioned Sayyid Sulayman Nadwi as well as Abu 'l-A 'la Mawdudi, Azad Subhani, and 'Abd al-Majid Daryabadi, though the task of delineating the characteristics of an Islamic state was delegated to Ishaq Nadwi.²⁰ The result was a detailed monograph titled *The Political System of Islam*. Oddly, the committee was never able to meet to discuss the contents of the book, and it took many years for the book itself to be published.²¹

²⁰ Cf. S.V.R. Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution: The Jama'at-i Islami of Pakistan*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994, pp. 112, 117–18.

²¹ Muhammad Ishaq Sandelawi, *Islam ka siyasi nizam*, A'zamgarh: Matba'-'i Ma'arif, 1957. While the title page gives the author's name as Muhammad Ishaq Sandelawi and introduces him as a professor at the Nadwat al-'Ulama in Lucknow, the author's

While the book does not call explicitly for revival of the caliphate, the contours of the Islamic state it delineates are suffused with the idea and the memory of the caliphate. Ishaq Nadwi argues that the cornerstone of the ‘system of the caliphate’ is the doctrine of God’s oneness and the concomitant necessity of human servitude to God.²² God alone is sovereign and the exclusive source of all law,²³ and it is a recognition of this fact that makes the Islamic system of government different from, and superior to, all others of a human devising.²⁴ The Qur’an reports God’s promise ‘to those ... who believe and do good deeds ... to make them successors [the Arabic term here is a cognate of “caliphs”] to the land, as He did those who came before them’ (Q 24:55). But, Nadwi cautions, this promise does not simply depend on sound belief and good deeds, but also on actively striving for the establishment of an Islamic political order.²⁵ Indeed, such struggle is a religious obligation, which some people have to undertake on behalf of the community as a whole or else the community at large would be deemed remiss.²⁶

Islamists such as Mawdudi would have fully concurred with Ishaq Nadwi so far. But in further delineating his vision of an Islamic political system, Ishaq Nadwi goes on to give a central role to the *‘ulama* in the running of the state. Sunni political theory requires that the caliph be elected and his actions regulated by ‘those who loosen and bind’. Many jurists thought that this group consisted of leading *‘ulama*, others argued that it comprised the military and political elite, and yet others wanted both sorts of notables to be counted among this select group. Ishaq Nadwi leans towards the third view, but he makes it clear that it is the *‘ulama* who really should be in charge, and other notable figures would be called in only as needed and always under the careful oversight of the *‘ulama*.²⁷ The *‘ulama* are to occupy a central position in the legislative assembly—a key site of binding and loosing the public affairs of the community—for it makes no sense for Islamic legal matters to be overseen by those not knowledgeable in them,

prefatory note is signed as ‘Muhammad Ishaq Siddiqi’. I will frequently refer to him as Ishaq Nadwi.

²² Ibid., p. 11.

²³ Ibid., p. 12.

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 11–13.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 58ff.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 67.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 202.

let alone by non-Muslims or Muslims of wayward beliefs (he mentions the Shi'a and the Ahmadis here).²⁸ The ruler himself is to be well grounded in religious and juridical matters, much as many medieval jurists required of the caliph; but if not, he would need to be all the more dependent on the *'ulama's* guidance.²⁹ This utopian vision of government leaves little room for the sort of modernizing elite that led the movement for Pakistan; it also leaves little space for autodidact Islamist intellectuals such as Mawdudi. It is not clear how Mawdudi would have responded to this blueprint for an Islamic state if he, as a member of the committee that had been constituted around 1940 to deliberate on this matter, had been able to debate it with its author.³⁰

MAWDUDI, THE CALIPHATE, AND THE *'ULAMA*

An exchange of sorts did take place between Mawdudi and Ishaq Nadwi some two decades after the establishment of Pakistan. Mawdudi was an active and influential contributor to debates on the place of Islam in Pakistan's public life and, in a tactical alliance with the *'ulama*, he had helped articulate the vision of an Islamic constitution for the Muslim homeland. For Mawdudi, as for the *'ulama*, there was much to be learnt from the example of Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman, and 'Ali—the Prophet Muhammad's first four successors whose thirty-year rule (632–61) is remembered by the Sunni tradition as the 'Rightly Guided Caliphate' (*al-khilafa al-rashida*, hereafter often referred to as the Rashidun caliphate). Yet Mawdudi was interested not just in what was distinctive about the Rashidun caliphate but also in what had caused this ideal caliphate to end so soon. He explored both these questions in a series of articles in his monthly magazine which were soon afterwards collected into a book, first published in 1966, titled

²⁸ Ibid., p. 198.

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 186f.

³⁰ But we do know that the views put forth by some leading religious scholars in 1950 to guide the constitution-making process in Pakistan were quite similar to Ishaq Nadwi's on what amounts to a veto that the *'ulama* were to have on the decisions of the head of the state; Mawdudi, on the other hand, clearly favored a head of state who would enjoy decisive authority in the manner of the classical caliph. See Leonard Binder, *Religion and Politics in Pakistan*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963, pp. 175f. In his detailed account of the *'ulama's* recommendations Binder makes no reference to the work of Ishaq Nadwi.

Khilafat wa mulukiyyat ('caliphate and kingship').³¹ Some of Mawdudi's arguments in this book, and the reaction they elicited from the 'ulama, merit a brief discussion.

Mawdudi begins his book with a delineation of the 'political teachings of the Qur'an', a subject on which he has written extensively elsewhere. The key idea here is that sovereignty belongs to God alone (*hakimiyyat-i ilahiyya*) and that it is God's law alone that ought to be 'supreme' (*sic*).³² The proper sphere of human action is defined by the idea of *khilafa*, which signifies the exercise of all rights and obligations within the sphere defined by recognition of God's sovereignty.³³ It is this firm sense of divinely delineated limits that makes human deputyship of God a true caliphate; a system that aspires to be autonomous (*khud-mukhtarana*) of God's sovereignty is not a caliphate but rather rebellion against God.³⁴ Mawdudi stresses, however, that the 'caliphate' belongs to the community as a whole and not to a select person, family, or group.³⁵ It is this feature of the caliphate, he says, that distinguishes it from kingship, theocratic rule, or the rule of a particular class, and orients it in a democratic direction. The main difference from a Western democracy is that the latter vests sovereignty in the people, whereas in an ideal Islamic system of government the people willingly restrict the sphere of their activity in accordance with the limits imposed on them by God.³⁶ Unsurprisingly, Mawdudi finds that the Rashidun were a perfect embodiment of these ideals as the Qur'an enunciates them. Theirs was an 'elected caliphate',³⁷ based on consultation and the rule of law. It was free of tribal and other prejudices, the public treasury was a trust rather than the personal property of the ruler, and governance was suffused with the 'spirit of democracy'.³⁸ A key question for Mawdudi, which takes up the bulk of his book, is why this ideal system of government came to such a sorry end. This is the discussion that landed him in hot water with the 'ulama.

Mawdudi had little patience with the traditional Sunni view that it was best not to speak about the conflicts among the Prophet's Companions

³¹ Sayyid Abu 'L-'la Mawdudi, *Khilafat wa mulukiyyat*, Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1966.

³² Ibid., p. 31.

³³ Ibid., p. 32.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 34.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 35.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 36.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 83.

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 100ff.

because they were all virtuous people; because the end of the Rashidun caliphate was the result of a conspiracy against Islam; because one could not really judge which Companions were in the right and which in the wrong; and because the history of their conflict as passed down to us was less than trustworthy. Mawdudi argues, *inter alia*, that if the same historians were deemed credible for other information, there was no particular reason why their testimony should be dismissed when it came to the events of the first *fitna*. He agrees that the Companions of the Prophet were indeed virtuous and well-intentioned people, but he vehemently rejects the view that they were therefore immune from error or that their actions could not be criticized by others (that is, by later Muslims). Significantly, he is not willing to give the benefit of the doubt to these early Muslims by suggesting that their errors, if that was what they were, are akin to different conclusions jurists might reach in their deliberations, some being correct and others not (*ijtihadi ghalati*). To Mawdudi some were indeed in the wrong, and one needed to clearly say so.

The main targets of Mawdudi's criticism in this account are the third caliph, 'Uthman (r. 644–56), and Mu'awiya (r. 661–80), the founder of the Umayyad dynasty (661–750). 'Uthman is castigated for his nepotism, which took the form of appointing kinsmen who were neither virtuous nor especially competent, and for his inability to remove them from office when their failings were brought to his attention. Mu'awiya receives the bulk of Mawdudi's criticism. 'Ali (r. 656–61) was clearly the rightful caliph after 'Uthman, Mawdudi insists, and Mu'awiya can only be seen as a rebel—a point he makes by relying on the influential medieval Hanafi jurist al-Jassas (d. 981). Mu'awiya was guided by political calculation rather than by the considerations of piety and virtue that had characterized the age of the Prophet's first successors. And it was his policies that played the most decisive role—as epitomized not only by his unjust opposition to 'Ali but also by his appointment of his son as his successor—in turning the ideal Rashidun caliphate into a worldly kingdom.

Mawdudi goes on to provide a grim view of the iniquitous ways of the post-Rashidun caliphs—that is, kings—detailing not only the harsh policies, the unjustified bloodshed, and the irreligious ways of the Umayyads (with the exception of 'Umar II) but equally those of the 'Abbasids (750–1258). He then argues that with the rise of Muslim kingship there came to be a practical separation between the political and the religious spheres. What had distinguished the Rashidun was precisely the effort to 'compre-

hensively establish the entirety of God's religion'—that is, worldly or political matters as much as religious ones.³⁹ This was no longer possible in view of the conduct of the worldly kings, and it was in reaction to this situation that a new religious leadership emerged in the community.⁴⁰ There was more conflict than cooperation between the religious and the political leaders, he says,⁴¹ with the scholars doing much of their work not with the assistance of but in spite of the political leadership. Yet while the religious scholars made highly significant contributions towards the preservation of Islam, Mawdudi says, 'it is clear that Islam's [true] intent cannot be fulfilled through this division of leadership'.⁴² That intent can only be satisfied with the union of the two. If the two had remained undivided 'for a century and a half or two, there probably would have been no unbelief left in the world; or, if there were, it would not have been able to raise its head again'.⁴³

One major consequence of this separation of the religious and the political, Mawdudi says, is that the religious differences that had emerged in the Muslim community in the wake of the first *fitna* acquired a permanent character.⁴⁴ The lamentable permanence of these theological and sectarian differences is explicable by the fact, as he sees it, that there was no generally acknowledged religious authority in the Muslim world that could bring an end to them. The Rashidun were just such a 'trusted' (*mu'tamad*) institution, but there was nothing of the sort after them.⁴⁵

Mawdudi now takes a rather surprising turn. The last quarter or so of the book is devoted exclusively to explaining the contributions of Abu Hanifa (d. 767), the eponymous founder of the Hanafi school of law and of his prized disciple, Abu Yusuf (d. 798), who would later serve as a judge under the early 'Abbasids. Abu Hanifa's achievement, Mawdudi argues, lies in what amounts to the codification of the law. Further, he established a veritable legal council at which important legal matters were debated and decisions reached on the basis of a broad agreement. Mawdudi also shows that Abu Hanifa represented the activist political strand of Muslim political

³⁹ Ibid., p. 201.

⁴⁰ Cf. Azad, *Mas'ala-yi khilafat*, pp. 22–3, on the separation of the political and the religious and divisions within the religious realm.

⁴¹ Mawdudi, *Khilafat wa mulukiyyat*, p. 203.

⁴² Ibid., p. 204.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 205.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 209ff.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 209; cf. p. 237.

thinking. Abu Hanifa, like many of his predecessors and contemporaries, believed that one should stand up to unjust rulers; and it was on this basis that he supported a major 'Alid revolt in the early years of the 'Abbasids. Other scholars came to hold a quietist view, which is what became the standard Hanafi view on the matter.

Abu Yusuf, the star pupil of Abu Hanifa, is seen as taking his master's legal project further by helping to institutionalize it through the agency of the state. It was thanks to him—as chief judge and, in effect, a minister of justice—that the Hanafis became the dominant school in 'Abbasid lands. But his politics, Mawdudi observes, were very different from Abu Hanifa's. Unlike his master (and forced by poverty), he accepted an official position under the iniquitous 'Abbasids. Yet, as his stern admonitions to Harun al-Rashid (r. 786–809) make clear in his *Kitab al-kharaj*, Abu Yusuf was no mere instrument of the state. Rather, he was keen to guide the ruler and his government in the light of Islamic norms; and his key inspiration in doing so was the example of the Rashidun, to which (rather than the practice of the Umayyads, or of Harun's 'Abbasid predecessors, for that matter) he makes repeated reference. For all the unsavoury ways of the caliphs, here was a distinguished scholar striving to change the system from within. This is a significant achievement; but, to Mawdudi, there is once again no mistaking the distance that separates Abu Yusuf from the world of the Rashidun:

If [Abu Yusuf's 'constitutional proposals', as put forth in the *Kitab al-kharaj*] are compared with the basic principles of the Islamic state, or with the Rashidun's model (*dastur al-'amal*), or even with the teachings of his own teacher, Abu Hanifa, they will be seen to fall far short of them all. There is not even a hint of an electoral caliphate in these proposals. There is no mention of government by consultation (*shura*). They are also lacking in any suggestion that an unjust ruler has no right to rule and that the people have the right to replace such a regime with a better government. In countless other respects, these suggestions are highly defective in comparison with the real Islamic concept [of government]. Yet this does not mean that ... Abu Yusuf did not want anything more than what he has laid out in his book. Rather, this is the most that, as a practical thinker, he could expect in that period of 'Abbasid rule. His concern was not to present a mere imaginary map (*khayali naqsha*), one that would be complete in its conception but lacking in any possibility of being used in actual circumstances. Rather, he wanted to develop a constitutional scheme that both met the minimum essential requirements of an Islamic state and which could be actually implemented in those circumstances.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 297.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

Mawdudi's analysis can easily be read as his prescription for Pakistan as it continued its interminable struggle to define the place of Islam in public life. The prescriptions of the Qur'an, the teachings of the Prophet, and the example of the first Rashidun were the ideal, but a compromise was required so that at least some basic Islamic principles could be given effect by the state. But though Mawdudi and the *'ulama* had worked closely in pushing for an Islamic constitution, Mawdudi's analysis is clearly intended also as a critique of the *'ulama*'s idealism, of their lack of good practical sense.⁴⁷

The *'ulama*, however, were considerably less idealistic than Mawdudi. For all their romanticism about the Rashidun, they had long made their peace with the fact that the age of the Rashidun was gone for good, and they had convinced themselves that the community of Muslims could continue to follow a righteous path as long as their religious affairs were overseen by the *'ulama*.⁴⁸ In marked contrast with this view, Mawdudi's foregoing analysis leaves no doubt that he saw a government according to the 'Qur'an's political teachings'—and the Rashidun's example—as very much within the realm of possibility. Put differently, Abu Yusuf's compromise need not limit what remained possible for latter-day Muslims. Mawdudi's analysis also makes it clear that the emergence of the *'ulama* is very much a product of an age in which religion and politics had ceased to be seamlessly unified in the person of the righteous ruler. The implication is that, should an Islamic state come about, with such rulers at the helm, the *'ulama* would essentially wither away. For all their points of agreement on other matters, this is not a vision that the *'ulama* might have been expected to regard warmly.

⁴⁷ Some also read it as a call for radical political change. According to an effusively pro-Mawdudi biography the noted modernist Fazlur Rahman suggested to the then President, Ayub Khan, that, in discussing Abu Hanifa's position on rebellion against an unjust government, Mawdudi was implicitly recommending a similar course of action in Pakistan. Rahman at that time was the director of the Institute of Islamic Research, an organization mandated by the Pakistani constitution to advise the government on Islamic matters. See 'Abd al-Rahman 'Abd, *Mufakkir-i Islam Sayyid Abu 'l-A'la Mawdudi*, Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1988 [1971], p. 364; Nasr, *Vanguard*, p. 158.

⁴⁸ In his treatise on the caliphate Azad made the argument that caliphs after the age of the Rashidun were far from perfect but that they did not need to be unblemished in order to be either legitimate or essential to the community's well-being (*Mas'ala-yi khilafat*, pp. 32–51). Though he had insisted that the Qur'anic reference to 'those in authority' could not be understood as anything but the rulers (ibid., p. 26), his view of the imperfect rectitude of the Muslim community is broadly in accord with the *'ulama*'s and, by the same token, very different from Mawdudi's.

It is not for such implications that the Sunni *‘ulama* have castigated Mawdudi, however. Instead, they have denounced him for what they see as intemperate criticism of the Companions of the Prophet, notably of ‘Uthman and Mu‘awiya, for taking a more favourable view of ‘Ali than of his opponents, and for reopening highly contentious early debates. The aforementioned Ishaq Nadwi was a major contributor to such criticism of Mawdudi, to which he devoted two volumes.⁴⁹ Ishaq Nadwi makes two additional points. First, Mawdudi’s alleged proclivity for Shi‘ism—an insinuation intended to discredit him with his predominantly Sunni followers—is reflected not only in his partisanship of ‘Ali over ‘Uthman and Mu‘awiya, but also in how he saw the relationship between religion and politics. Politics, Nadwi says, is only one facet of religion, yet rather than viewing politics from a religious perspective Mawdudi tends to approach the entirety of religion from a political perspective. ‘This is a purely Shi‘i perspective,’ Nadwi argues. ‘Looking at Shi‘ism, you would think that the reason behind Muhammad’s prophethood was not to guide [God’s] creation to rectitude and to establish a relationship of servitude between the Master and His servants but solely to establish the government and the caliphate in his own family.’⁵⁰

Second, Ishaq Nadwi argues, Mawdudi’s discussion of the demise of the Rashidun amounts to an acknowledgement that any such system is unworkable in practice: it lasted for a mere thirty years—and, on Mawdudi’s showing, considerably less than that, since ‘Uthman’s caliphate was already plagued by severe problems. This adds up, according to Ishaq Nadwi, to saying that a proper Islamic state has been absent for much of Islam’s history, that such a state ‘is all very good in theory but impossible in practice’. If this is the message that comes across from Mawdudi’s analysis, then it is futile, Nadwi says, to urge people to struggle for the establishment of an

⁴⁹ Muhammad Ishaq Siddiqi Nadwi, *Izhar-i haqiqat ba-jawab khilafat wa mulukiyat*, vol. I, Karachi: Dar al-Kutub Imdadiyya, n.d. (the preface is dated 1971); vol. II, Karachi: Hasan al-Rahman, New Town Mosque, n.d. The author’s name as it appears on the title page of this work is slightly different from how it appears on the title page of *Islam ka siyasi nizam*. The title page of the first volume of *Izhar-i haqiqat* also introduces him (in an echo of the way he is introduced on the dust jacket of *Siyasi nizam*) as ‘former principal and professor of hadith at the Nadwat al-‘Ulama, Lucknow’. Despite the slight discrepancy in how his full name is given in the two works, I am inclined to consider the author of *Izhar-i haqiqat* and of *Siyasi nizam* as the same person.

⁵⁰ Ishaq Nadwi, *Izhar-i haqiqat*, vol. I, pp. 4–5, quotation at p. 5.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

Islamic state.⁵¹ Though Ishaq Nadwi is no friend of Mawdudi's Islamist organization, the Jama'at-i Islami, his point here is obviously to show Mawdudi's devotees that their leader may be undercutting the ideological bases of his own organization.

The lament that Mawdudi's critique of the first generations of Islam weakens calls for an Islamic state in the present would be repeated again.⁵² A rather more unusual criticism came in the mid-1990s from Ziya al-Rahman Faruqi (d. 1997), the leader of a militant Sunni sectarian organization in Pakistan. In an unmistakable swipe at the Islamists, and not just Mawdudi, he argued that a large part of the reason why Islam has not been successfully implemented in states such as Pakistan is that people have not tried to emulate the model and governing principles of an actual Islamic state, namely the Rashidun caliphate. Instead, they have 'laid claims to [understanding] Islam merely by looking at the Qur'an and the hadith-reports [of the Prophet Muhammad]'.⁵³ From this perspective, Mawdudi's detailed delineation of the Qur'an's political teachings is less helpful for the project of establishing an Islamic state than would be a description of the Rashidun's policies and practices, and this is what Faruqi sought to provide in some of his own writings on the early caliphs.

MILITANT SECTARIANISM AND THE CALIPHATE

I have argued so far that the idea of the caliphate has often been invoked in modern South Asia as a way of debating matters other than the resurrection of the caliphate itself. This is as true of Muhammad Iqbal's reflections on the question of legal reform as of at least some strands of thought about the *imarat-i shar'iyya*. It is equally true of debates on Islamic constitutionalism in late colonial South Asia and in Pakistan and, indeed, about the role of the *'ulama* in Muslim life. However, and leaving aside the question of whether demands for an Islamic state can be read as appeals for the re-establishment of the caliphate, there *are* instances in which the resurrection of the caliphate, too, has been explicitly proposed. In Pakistan one of the most notable of these is represented by the Sipah-i Sahaba ('The Army of

⁵¹ Ishaq Nadwi, *Izhar-i haqiqat*, vol. I, p. 5.

⁵² Cf. Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Tā'rikhuna al-muftara 'alayhi*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 2005, pp. 46–57, esp. p. 46.

⁵³ Ziya al-Rahman Faruqi, *Khilafat wa hukumat*, Faisalabad: Idara-yi Isha'at al-Ma'arif, 1995, p. 25, cf. also p. 32.

the [Prophet's] Companions'), which was led in the 1990s by the aforementioned Ziya al-Rahman Faruqi.⁵⁴

This organization was founded in 1985 by Haqq Nawaz, a Deobandi mosque preacher in the medium-sized southern Punjab city of Jhang. The Iranian revolution of 1979 was one important part of the context in which the Sipah-i Sahaba was established. Even as the revolution created a new religious fervour among many Shi'a worldwide, it caused considerable anxiety among not a few Sunnis. This had to do with worries that, in being drawn to Khomeini's revolutionary rhetoric, some among the youth might be lured from their Sunni commitments. The governing elite in not a few Middle Eastern regimes also harboured deep misgivings about the subversive potential of the revolutionary regime in Iran. In particular local contexts a newly energized Shi'a also fuelled long-standing tensions with their sectarian rivals. Responding to measures by the government of General Zia al-Haq (r. 1977–88) to 'Islamize' major sectors of Pakistani economy and society, the Shi'a mobilized in considerable numbers to resist the extension of any such measures to their community. This was seen in some Sunni circles not merely as a call for religious autonomy but, more ominously, as an effort to hold the implementation of Islamic law hostage to the whims of a small sectarian community. There also was a local context, in Jhang and elsewhere in southern Punjab, where the Sunnis most receptive to the appeal of the Sipah-i Sahaba tended to be members of the urban bourgeoisie with a not-too-distant rural background as disenfranchised peasants, whereas some of the most powerful landholders of the area were Shi'is.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Another instance of the call for the resurrection of the caliphate is represented by Dr Israr Ahmad (d. 2010) and his *Tanzim-i Islami*. Ahmad, a physician who had once been associated with Mawdudi's Jama'at-i Islami, based himself on certain *hadith* reports of the Prophet Muhammad according to which the government, after having been transformed into kingship, would return to being 'a caliphate according to the path of prophethood'. See Israr Ahmad, *Pakistan main nizam-i khilafat: kiya, kiyun, aur kaise?*, Lahore: Maktaba-yi Khuddam al-Qur'an, 2001, pp. 54–9. He also believed that Pakistan was the most likely site for this revived caliphate. This region appeared to have been chosen by God, as suggested by the fact that 'all great personalities of the Muslim world over the past four hundred years were born in the Indian subcontinent and great religious movements have likewise emerged in this region' (*ibid.*, p. 86). By all indications Ahmad's calls for a resurrected caliphate have had little resonance in Pakistan.

⁵⁵ See Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam*, Princeton University Press, 2002, pp. 110–43.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

The Sipah-i Sahaba was banned in early 2002 along with a number of other militant Pakistani organizations, but it has continued to operate under different guises. In recent years some splinter groups of this organization seem also to have joined hands with the neo-Taliban groups active in the tribal areas of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province (the former North-West Frontier Province).

The Sipah-i Sahaba looked to the Rashidun for inspiration on all matters. This in itself is not remarkable, since the Rashidun are revered by the Sunnis in general. The Shi'a, of course, view the first three of the four Rashidun as usurpers of the legitimate claims of 'Ali and his bloodline, and this has always been a major stumbling-block to efforts to improve the relations between the two communities. The Sipah-i Sahaba's noisy identification with the Rashidun was intended precisely to remind their Sunni audiences of the sharp lines that separate the Shi'a from Muslims properly speaking. Given that 'Ali is recognized as one of the four Rashidun caliphs, the Sipah-i Sahaba also sought, in a none-too-subtle move, to challenge the Shi'is' claim to 'Ali, their foundational figure.

As the remark by Ziya al-Rahman Faruqi quoted earlier shows, the Sipah-i Sahaba looked to the Rashidun as providing a *practical* model for an Islamic state—indeed, much more so than even the teachings of the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad. In at least some instances, however, the organization's leadership went further, to call for the re-establishment of a universal caliphate. Faruqi was by far the most enthusiastic of such advocates.

Writing in the early 1990s, Faruqi argued that it was only through the establishment of the caliphate on the model of the Rashidun that the *shari'a* could be given full effect and true justice and equality introduced in society.⁵⁶ Such a caliphate was alone capable of solving the problems of the Muslim world: it would resolve, he assured his audience, differences of race and language as well as those based on competing schools of law and doctrine; bring an end to conflicts such as those in Kashmir, Palestine, Bosnia, and Afghanistan; and, in 'reawakening the spirit of jihad', establish a new world order with Muslims at its helm.⁵⁷ This new dispensation, which he calls the 'caliphal world order' ('khilafat world order'), is meant to be an

⁵⁶ Faruqi, *Khilafat wa hukumat*, pp. 31–3.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 33; cf. Ziya al-Rahman Faruqi, *Khilafat World Order*, Faisalabad: Idara-yi Isha'at al-Ma'arif, 2003, p. 125.

alternative to the US-dominated global order and the surest mechanism whereby Muslims could reassert their position in the world. Muslims ought to develop their educational and scientific capacities, pool their very considerable natural and other resources, and come together in pursuit of their shared interests. The model he seems to have had in mind allows the continued existence of individual Muslim states,⁵⁸ but it envisages their acting in unison in everything from what messages are relayed by their media, to a shared educational vision and joint scientific and technological ventures, to a common military. Also envisioned is the establishment of governments that are based on the principles of the Rashidun, with a caliph at the head of this universalist utopia.⁵⁹

Faruqi is critical of Mawdudi on several grounds, yet the differences between the two are rather less substantial than might appear at first. Mawdudi's criticism of 'Uthman and Mu'awiya is, of course, a very significant difference.⁶⁰ Faruqi is predictably sensitive to any criticism of the Rashidun, and his vision of the ideal Islamic polity resolutely places Mu'awiya alongside the Rashidun caliphs. To Mawdudi, as observed earlier, Mu'awiya was a 'rebel' against 'Ali's authority and a major factor in turning the righteous caliphate into a worldly kingship. Yet, however the boundaries of the ideal polity are delineated, Faruqi and Mawdudi seem to agree that Muslims have lacked a proper Islamic government for much of their history. They also concur on the very real possibility of resurrecting such a government, though Mawdudi does not speak of it as a pan-Islamic caliphate in the manner of Faruqi.

Important as the idea of the caliphate was to the Sipah-i Sahaba, it is worth asking how the rank and file, and the intended audiences, of this organization would have understood it. For many among them, sentimental evocations of the Rashidun and of Mu'awiya are surely a reminder that these revered figures have been unjustly treated by Shi'i polemicists, that what is at stake is to defend the honour of these wronged Companions of the Prophet. As Faruqi's rhetoric makes clear, the practice of the Rashidun also points to what an Islamic state should look like, and this serves as a critique not only of the modernizing governing elite who have resisted the establishment of such a state but also of the uninformed and lacklustre efforts of those who

⁵⁸ Faruqi, *Khilafat World Order*, p. 134.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 134, 148–51.

⁶⁰ Faruqi, *Khilafat wa hukumat*, pp. 21–2.

are supposed to have been working towards it. Yet, for many of those who are drawn to it, an Islamic state exists not only for its own sake but also in order to usher in a reign of justice and prosperity. The idea of justice, and specifically of social justice, does indeed figure prominently in Faruqi's evocations of the Rashidun caliphate, and it is easy to see how it would appeal to the needs and grievances of the Sipah-i Sahaba's constituency.

The austere conduct of the Rashidun—and their sharing the spoils of the early conquests with fellow believers—would have appealed much to people who had long nursed deep resentment at the iniquitous ways of a rich and corrupt political elite. Mu'awiya's kingly rule is an obvious problem from this perspective, but Faruqi—whose anti-Shi'i agenda requires that it be accommodated within his world-view—tries to resolve the problem with some ingenuity. The early polity of the Rashidun and of Mu'awiya, he says, presents models of both hardship (*'azima*) and permissibility (*rukhsa*) with Mu'awiya's caliphate being an instance of the latter. In this way, the early polity is a good model for Muslims in all possible circumstances—as much for those living lives of simplicity and hardship as for those enjoying the fruits of an advanced civilization.⁶¹ While this interpretive sleight of hand accommodates Mu'awiya's non-egalitarian ways, it is clear from Faruqi's rhetoric that socio-economic justice and the Islamic government's ministering to the needs of the people are what his audience really wishes to hear about when the Rashidun are the subject under discussion.⁶²

Appeals to the idea of the caliphate need obviously to be understood with reference to the specificities of the time and place in which they are made rather than as a timeless symbol that necessarily evokes shared Muslim responses. My discussion here goes beyond this truism, however. I have sought to show that the significance of the idea of the caliphate lies also in providing fertile ground for debating a broad range of issues that many Muslims have deemed important to their lives in modern South Asia—from questions of legal reform to religious authority to conceptions of the Islamic state to socio-economic justice.⁶³ This is not to say that the idea, or

⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 28–31.

⁶² Ibid., pp. 299–332 ('The economic reforms of the [Rashidun] caliphate'), pp. 287–98 ('The duties of the caliph or head of the state'), also see pp. 28–9, 333–41. For specific references to social justice (*'adl-i ijtima'i*) and related ideas see Faruqi, *Khilafat World Order*, pp. 53, 111, 123, 129.

⁶³ This argument is similar in some respects to that of Minault, *The Khilafat Movement*, pp. 64, 208–10, and *passim*.

SOUTH ASIAN ISLAM AND THE IDEA OF THE CALIPHATE

ideal, of the caliphate has no appeal for anyone in South Asia; the very fact that a variety of contentious issues can be discussed with reference to it suggests its significance in modern Islamic thought. Yet a good deal of the scope and nuance of this thought would be obscured if we focus exclusively, or too narrowly, on the institution of the caliphate and on sporadic calls for its resurrection.

WHO SPEAKS OF WHAT CALIPHATE?

THE INDIAN KHILAFAT MOVEMENT
AND ITS AFTERMATH¹*Jan-Peter Hartung*

From at least the eighteenth century onwards we are confronted with a rhetoric of decline throughout the Muslim world, coupled with an urgent call for reform from a significant number of members of the religious elite. In the beginning this stood somewhat in contrast to the cultural blossoming of an almost baroque Muslim culture, epitomized in the ‘Tulip Period’ (*lâle devri*) in the Ottoman Empire as well as in developments of regional polities, such as North Indian Awadh or South Indian Hyderabad.² Cultural

¹ The entire topic will be more thoroughly dealt with in my forthcoming book *A System of Life: Mawdūdī and the Ideologization of Islam*, London: C. Hurst & Co./New York: Columbia University Press.

² For the ‘Tulip Period’ see Wilhelm Heinz, ‘Die Kultur der Tulpenzeit des Osmanischen Reiches’, *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, 61 (1967), 62–116; for Awadh see e.g. Rosie Llewellyn-Jones, ‘Lucknow, City of Dreams’, in Violette Graff (ed.), *Lucknow: Memoirs of a City*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997, 49–66; Hussein Keshani, ‘Theatres of Power and Piety: Architecture and Court Culture in Awadh, India’, in Albrecht Fuess and Jan-Peter Hartung (eds), *Court Cultures in the Muslim World: Seventh to Nineteenth Century*, London and New York: Routledge, 2011, 445–71; for Hyderabad see e.g. Allison Mackenzie Shah, ‘Hyderabad

and political developments, it was felt by the religious elites, did not really go hand in hand; hence the political doom of the Muslim world in the course of European expansion was seen as a clear proof of a moral decline which could barely be covered up by a pretty baroque façade. Attempts by the ruling elites to make up for it and thus to keep pace with the political developments came rather late and therefore stood little chance of success.

For the religious elites this was indeed a source of major concern: after all, from a normative perspective God had promised the Muslim community the monopoly to enjoin good and prevent evil, provided—and this seems to be the crux of the matter—that it ‘believes and works righteous deeds’.³ Consequently, it was now the responsibility of the religious elites first to make the community aware of its disastrous state, and second to propose ways out of the crisis. Eighteenth-century scholars such as Shah Wali Allah of Delhi (d. 1762), Central Arabia’s Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab (d. 1792), or ‘Uthman dan Fodio (d. 1817) in West Africa were—for all their diversity—united in their condemnation of declining morality and pleas for a return to a scripture-based piety.⁴ In the nineteenth century, however, the strategies for overcoming the crisis adapted to the run of events: they now oscillated between open admiration for the science and technology-mediated Western ideology of societal progress and a clear rejection of it on the grounds of the axiomatic superiority of a somewhat idealized Islamic culture, rooted not least in the above-quoted Qur’anic injunction. Two scholars of early colonial Egypt, ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti (d. 1825) and Rifa‘a al-Tahtawi (d. 1872), may serve as cases in point.⁵

in the Nineteenth Century: Re-Scripting Urban Heritage, 1858–1868’, in Salma K. al-Jayussi *et al.* (eds), *The City in the Islamic World*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008, 589–614.

³ Q 24 (al-Nūr): 55: *amanū minkum wa-‘amilū al-ṣāliḥāt*.

⁴ See Shāh Walī Allāh Muḥaddith Dihlawī, *Izālat al-khafā’ ‘an khilāfat al-khulafā’*, 2 vols., Lahore: Suhayl Aked’imī, 1396/1976, vol. I, 255–95 [*Faṣl dar iqāmat-i dalīl-i ‘aqlī bar khilāfat-i khulafā’*], esp. p. 256; Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, *Majmū‘at al-tawḥīd al-najdiyya*, Mecca: Maṭba‘at al-Ḥukūma, 1391 AH, *passim*; Shaykh ‘Uthmān ibn Fūdī, *Die Lampe der Brüder (Sirāḡ al-iḥwān) von ‘Uṭmān b. Fūdī: Reform und Gihād im Sūdān*, ed. and trans. Ulrich Rebstock, WalldorfHessen: VfO, 1985, pp. 70–5 (Arabic text pp. 4–9). See also Ahmad Dallal, ‘The Origins and Objectives of Islamic Revivalist Thought, 1750–1850’, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 113, 3 (1993), 341–59.

⁵ See ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī, *Mazḥar al-taqdīs bi-dhahāb dawlat al-faransīs*, ed. Ḥasan Muḥammad Jawhar and ‘Umar al-Dasūqī, Cairo: Lajnat al-Bayān al-‘Arabī,

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, however, the crisis assessment by the religious elites and their offers of solutions in view of the colonial situation had increasingly become politically oriented, and thus joined forces with anti-colonialist liberation movements. Facing structurally similar situations—domination by what was felt to be an alien culture—Muslim religious elites set out on a quest for an common denominator to pool resources in the struggle to overcome Western hegemony. This appeared even more pressing as different administrative measures in various colonies, mainly due to national differences in the respective European powers' concepts of 'societal development', caused colonial societies to increasingly drift apart from each other. Hence the search for a somewhat idealized common religious tradition gained considerable momentum, and in this the activities of versatile networkers such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (d. 1897) appeared to be as important as theological considerations of common Muslim institutions, places or historical events, as pushed forward by scholars like al-Afghani's early associate Muhammad 'Abduh (d. 1905) or the South Asian Muhammad Shibli Nu'mani (d. 1914).⁶ What made al-Afghani and also Shibli stand out against 'Abduh was their talent for employing emotive language in their writings to transgress the regional confines and ignite a broad collective feeling of a common heritage and, thus, common fate.⁷ As soon as

1389/1969, pp. 31–5; 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jabārtī, *al-Jabartī's Chronicle of the First Seven Months of the French Occupation of Egypt: Muḥarram–Rajab 1213, 15 June–December 1798 = Ta'rikh muddat al-farānsi bi-Miṣr*, ed. and trans. Shmuel Moreh, Leiden: Brill, 1975, pp. 23–5, 43–7 (Arabic text pp. 10–17); 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jabārtī, *Ajā'ib al-āthār fi'l-tarājim wa'l-akhbār*, 4 vols., ed. 'Abd al-Raḥīm [ibn] 'Abd al-Raḥmān [ibn] 'Abd al-Raḥīm, Cairo: Maṭba'at Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 1998, vol. III, pp. 140, 148–50, 170f., 299–305, 314, 561–3; Rifā'a Rāfi' al-Taḥṭāwī, *al-Diḥwān al-naḥs fi ḥiṭṭ al-Bārīs, aw takhlīs al-ibrīs fi talkhiṣ Bārīs*, ed. 'Alī Aḥmad Kan'an, Abu Dhabi: Dār al-Suwaydī li'l-Naṣhṣ wa'l-Tawzī'/Beirut: al-Mu'assasa al-'Arabiyya li'l-Dirāsāt wa'l-Naṣhṣ, 2002, pp. 24–9 and *passim*.

⁶ See al-Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī al-Afghānī and al-Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh, *al-'Urwa al-wuthqā*, ed. Sayyid Ḥādī Khusrāwshāhī, Tehran: al-Majma' al-'Ālamī li'l-Taqrīb bayn al-Madhāhib al-Islāmiyya, 1421 AH (2nd edition), pp. 120f., 333f., and 344f.; al-Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh, *al-Islām wa'l-naṣrāniyya mā'a al-'ilm wa'l-maddaniyya*, ed. al-Sayyid Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, Cairo: Maktabat wa-Maṭba'at Muḥammad 'Alī Ṣubayḥ wa-Awlādihi 1373 AH (8th edition), e.g. p. 138; Muḥammad Shibli Nu'mānī, *al-Fārūq ya'nī Ḥaḍrat 'Umar—raḍīya 'llāhu 'anhu—kī mufaṣṣal sawānīḥ 'umrī*, Azamgarh: Ma'ba'-i Ma'ārif, 1898.

⁷ For the Indian context see Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1982,

such an awareness had been created, the symbols on which it was based upon could be utilized for political ends: when core religious symbols of high emotional value—endowed with an aura of sacrality—appear threatened the rhetoric of decline and the call for reform can erupt in political action, provided that this is channelled accordingly.

The crux of the matter lies indeed in channelling emotions by appealing to collective symbols in distinct ways, thus constituting what had recently been labelled an ‘emotional community’:⁸ after all, emotive symbols suggest a common understanding without the need to make their meaning explicit, and thus constitute a somehow homogeneous community. Although this appears to be a major hermeneutical fallacy, the fuzziness of meaning that underlies symbols could well be utilized deliberately, as in the case of the Khilafat Movement in British India between roughly 1919 and 1924, which will be discussed here. On the other hand, as the example here can also illustrate, such deliberate lack of conceptual clarity can also contribute to the disintegration of social movements at the very moment when disparities in the actual meaning of a collective symbol become apparent. To substantiate the underlying theoretical considerations the focus will be laid on the respective understandings of ‘caliphate’ of Muhammad ‘Ali ‘Jawhar’ (d. 1931) and Abu ‘l-Kalam ‘Azad’ (d. 1958), two main protagonists of the Khilafat Movement, and of Sayyid Abu ‘l-A‘la Mawdudi (d. 1979), whose own distinct concept of ‘caliphate’ was considerably influenced by his reassessment of the eventual failure of the Khilafat Movement.

MUHAMMAD ‘ALI ‘JAWHAR’

Muhammad ‘Ali, the Aligarh- and Oxford-educated civil servant-turned-journalist who adopted the penname ‘Jawhar’,⁹ is widely considered one of

pp. 43f.; also Markus Daechsel, *The Politics of Self-Expression: The Urdu Middle-Class Milieu in Mid-Twentieth Century India and Pakistan*, London and New York: Routledge, 2006, p. 136.

⁸ This term was coined by the historian Barbara H. Rosenwein. See her ‘Worrying about Emotions in History’, *The American History Review* 107, 3 (2002), 842–45; Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006, pp. 24–7. The way Rosenwein had defined the term, however, does not appear useful for our ends, as she does not focus on the role that emotions play in the constitution of a community.

⁹ See Zafar ‘Ali Šiddiqī, *Mawlānā Muḥammad ‘Alī aur jang-i āzādī*, Rampur: Rāmpūr Riḍā Lā‘ibrirī, 1998, pp. 9–12 and 46–50.

the driving forces behind the movement. He owed his commitment to the 'caliphate' cause to the fact that he himself felt his professional career to be a mirror of the ill-treatment of Muslims under colonial rule. His English weekly *Comrade*, launched in 1911, and a little later also its Urdu pendant *Hamdard*, thus became two of the main speaking-tubes of Muslim interests in colonial India by presenting their cause in a pan-Islamic framework.¹⁰ Following somewhat in the footsteps of al-Afghani, Shibli, and other similar activists, Muhammad 'Ali focused on prime markers of a deterritorialized Muslim cultural and political identity, including the 'caliphate' as its political core.¹¹

While his reading of Islam appeared to be more that of an educated layman, thus rather lacking in depth and systematic,¹² it was nonetheless sufficient to be employed in his passionate journalistic writings as well as his extensive Urdu poetry,¹³ designed to ignite the desired anti-colonialist sentiments in a wide section of the IndoMuslim population. Eager to look out for a religiously sanctioned political leader who stood clearly opposed to the British, Muhammad 'Ali strongly supported the cause of the Ottoman sultan—formally holder of the caliphate since the capture of Cairo in 1517—all the way throughout the First World War. His hopes, however, did not stand and fall with the Ottomans alone: after the Turkish defeat, enshrined in the humiliating Treaty of Sèvres (1920), the subsequent War of Independence and, as a result, the abolition of the sultanate as the political institution and the caliphate as its more religious equivalent, Muhammad 'Ali was willing to concede leadership to other Muslim contenders. While the Indian Khilafat Movement soon disintegrated under growing dissent among its leadership as well as—partly as a result of this dissent—increasing communal conflict between various religious denominations in the subcontinent,¹⁴ Muhammad 'Ali stuck to his politics of communal advocacy by supporting a caliphate of the leader of the Central Arabian Al Sa'ud, 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn

¹⁰ See *ibid.*, pp. 126–38, 158–61, and 168–90.

¹¹ See Mushirul Hasan, *Mohamed [sic] Ali: Ideology and Politics*, New Delhi: Manohar, 1981, pp. 42–4.

¹² This is quite apparent from his autobiographical sketch *My Life: A Fragment*, ed. Afzal Iqbal, Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1942, pp. 82–97 and 156–211.

¹³ See Şiddiqi, *Mawlānā Muḥammad 'Alī*, pp. 204–69.

¹⁴ See Minault, *Khilafat Movement*, pp. 167–207; M. Naem Qureshi, *Pan-Islam in British Indian Politics: A Study of the Khilafat Movement, 1918–1924*, Leiden, Boston, and Cologne: Brill, 1999, pp. 317–413.

Sa'ud (d. 1953); thus he entered into conflict with those who supported the claim of Sayyid Husayn ibn 'Ali al-Hashimi (d. 1931), formerly Sharif of Mecca, and King Fu'ad I of Egypt (d. 1936) respectively.¹⁵ The desecration of places of pious visitation (*ziyara*) in Iraq and the Hijaz by the predecessors of Ibn Sa'ud in 1801 and 1803 and again by his followers after the ultimate capture of Mecca in 1924¹⁶ gave way to serious doubts about the Wahhabi commitment to the protection of the *haramayn sharifayn* and were well suited to discredit any of their non-Wahhabi supporters. Hence, while he attended the 1926 Mecca Congress,¹⁷ it became clear even to Muhammad 'Ali and his brother Shawkat (d. 1938) that, because of the King's religious policy, especially in the Hijaz, Ibn Sa'ud could not yet ensure enough support to revive the historical caliphate under his aegis.¹⁸ Meanwhile, affairs in India moved increasingly away from the idea of a pan-Islamic political superstructure and gave way to various nationalisms, at least for the time being.¹⁹ One of the most interesting and complex advocates of one kind of

¹⁵ See Minault, *Khilafat Movement*, pp. 206f.; Martin Kramer, *Islam Assembled: The Advent of the Muslim Congresses*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1986, pp. 106–22; Mushirul Hasan, 'Secular and Communitarian Representations of Indian Nationalism: Ideology and Praxis of Azad and Mohamed Ali [sic]', in Mushirul Hasan (ed.), *Islam and Indian Nationalism: Reflections on Abul Kalam Azad*, New Delhi: Manohar, 1992, 77–99, pp. 85–7 and 89f.; Qureshi, *Pan-Islam*, pp. 396f. and 400–2.

¹⁶ On the religious policy of the Wahhabis in the Hijaz see Elisabeth Sirriyeh, *Sufis and Anti-Sufis: The Defence, Rethinking and Rejection of Sufism in the Modern World*, Richmond: Curzon, 1999, pp. 22–4; Guido Steinberg, *Religion und Staat in Saudi-Arabien: Die wahhabitischen Gelehrten 1902–1953*, Würzburg: Ergon, 2002, pp. 515f. and 535–42; on the impact of these events on South Asia see Jan-Peter Hartung, 'Wahhābis and Anti-Wahhābis: The Learned Discourse on Sufism in Contemporary South Asia' in Søren Christian Lassen and Hugh van Skyhawk (eds), *Sufi Traditions and New Departures: Recent Scholarship on Continuity and Change in South Asian Sufism*, Islamabad: Taxila Institute of Asian Civilizations, 2008, 82–110, pp. 89–91.

¹⁷ See Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, pp. 108f. and 112–16; Reinhard Schulze, *Islamischer Internationalismus im 20. Jahrhundert: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Islamischen Weltliga*, Leiden, Boston, and Cologne: Brill, 1990, p. 82.

¹⁸ See Kramer, *Islam Assembled*, pp. 120f.; Schulze, *Islamischer Internationalismus*, p. 85.

¹⁹ This attitude of Indian Muslim intellectual elites towards pan-Islamic ideals changed again from the middle of the twentieth century, at least with the establishment of the Muslim World League (Rabitat al-'Alam al-Islami). See Jan-Peter Hartung, *Viele Wege und ein Ziel: Leben und Werk von Sayyid Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Ḥasanī Nadwī (1914–1999)*, Würzburg: Ergon, 2004, pp. 404f. and 421–26.

WHO SPEAKS OF WHAT CALIPHATE?

nationalism, emanating from his engagement with the caliphate issue, was Abu 'l-Kalam, who was better known by his pen-name 'Azad'.

ABU 'L-KALAM 'AZAD'

Unlike Muhammad 'Ali, Azad had rather been delayed in his exposure to the issues debated in Indo-Muslim intellectual and political circles. Born in 1888 in Mecca to an Indian expatriate and a Hijazi woman of notable descent, his childhood and early education were strongly affected by the cultural tension that resulted from his origin, perhaps best epitomized in the fact that, regardless of the Arab environment, his father used to converse with him in a highly elaborate Urdu.²⁰ The language abilities he thus developed came in very convenient when, in 1898, his family relocated to British India, where he, who struggled somewhat to gain access to the intellectual and political networks, was left with little choice but to make a name for himself as an independent player. Having settled in Calcutta, which at that time seethed hotly in the political underground,²¹ in 1912 Azad started the increasingly influential Urdu journal *al-Hilal*, which, after it was shut down only two years later by the British colonial administration under the only recently passed Press Act, was replaced in 1915 by *al-Balagh*.²² Soon these journals became the major platform for Azad's early stand on, among others, the 'caliphate issue'.

His understanding of 'caliphate' appeared somewhat trapped in the predicament of normative expectation and concrete realities. Azad's religious scholarship, which he owed not least to the thorough religious education that he had received mainly in the Hijaz, allowed him to use an erudite religious language, while his quite realistic view of the contemporary social and political developments in India and beyond enabled him to employ

²⁰ See Ian Henderson Douglas, *Abul Kalam Azad: An Intellectual and Religious Biography*, ed. Gail Minault and Christian W. Troll, Delhi *et al.*: Oxford University Press, 1988, pp. 37f. Despite some criticism, mainly by its two editors, the late Reverend Douglas' work still remains by far the most comprehensive study of Azad's life and works.

²¹ See Rajat K. Ray, 'Revolutionaries, Pan-Islamists and Bolsheviks: Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and the Political Underworld in Calcutta, 1905–1925', in Mushirul Hasan (ed.), *Communal and PanIslamic Trends in Colonial India*, New Delhi: Manohar, 1985, 101–24.

²² See, for example, Qureshi, *Pan-Islam*, p. 72; Douglas, *Azad*, pp. 105f.

pragmatic political language also. While his shifts in the use of language from a distinctly religious to a more political register have contributed to the widely held view that Azad's intellectual development can reasonably be divided into two distinct phases, there seems to be an alternative explanation:²³ Azad, so it will be argued here, more or less deliberately employed highly emotive religious language to see through an even less religious agenda, namely the independence (*svaraj*) of India from colonial rule. Thus his open advocacy of the preservation of the Ottoman-held caliphate as a necessary Islamic religious–political institution as early as 1912 was, though dressed in religious language, strongly affected by the political conflicts between the Ottomans and the British as the common enemy. Consequently he stressed the loyalty of the Indian Muslims to the Ottoman sultan almost as a religious obligation, when he stated that 'we must always remember that the Ottoman Caliph is the guardian of the two Holy Places, and that the degradation of Ottoman Turkey is a degradation of Islam, a degradation which jeopardizes not only Islam, but the honour and dignity of the whole of Asia'.²⁴ While he referred to common Qur'anic verses such as 4:59—'Obey God, and obey the Messenger, and those invested with command among you!'—to bolster his argument, his main objective, even in his seminal statement on the issue on 28 February 1920 at the Bengal Khilafat Conference in Calcutta, soon afterwards published as *Mas'ala-yi khilafat wa jazira-yi 'arab*, seemed to have been rather to persuade Indian Muslims to throw off any possible loyalty to the British colonial power.²⁵ Its ultimate consequence—and here Azad's emphasis differed considerably from that of Muhammad 'Ali—was that fulfilling one's religious obligations inevitably included support of India's demand for independence.

Given Azad's realistic insight that the Muslims, as a religious minority in the subcontinent, would not be able to achieve independence exclusively by

²³ Douglas, *Azad*, pp. 251–90, was the first one who challenged the so far dominant perception of the two phases in Azad's life.

²⁴ Abū 'l-Kalām Āzād, 'Ek 'aẓīm al-shān ijtīmā', *al-Hilāl*, 2, 7 (1913), 4–8, p. 5.

²⁵ See Abū 'l-Kalām Āzād, *Mas'ala-yi khilāfat wa jazira-yi 'arab*, Lahore: Nāmī pres, 1963, pp. 44–58, 123–69, and 219–25. Thanks to Muhammad Qasim Zaman for making me aware of the fact that Azad's treatise was soon translated into Arabic and was, as 'al-Khilāfa al-islāmiyya', published by Muhammad Rashid Rida in *al-Manār* between 1922 and 1923. This is quite remarkable, because Azad and Rida differed considerably in their views on the matter, especially after the abolition of the Ottoman caliphate.

their own efforts, a case had to be made for collaboration with non-Muslims. Since Azad nonetheless kept to the Qur'anic notion of the Muslims as 'the best of communities I [i.e. God] brought about for mankind',²⁶ he had to develop an authoritatively grounded argument for collaboration with non-Muslims on an equal footing. He did so in two consecutive steps:²⁷ First, he applied the Qur'anic verses 60:8–16²⁸ to the Indian situation, equating Hindus with those who—by and large—did not show hostility towards Muslims and were rather looking for mutual accommodation, while paralleling the British with the *mukadhdhibun*, the staunch deniers of God's final revelation to mankind, with whom no friendly interaction should take place. Second, he referred to the so-called 'Constitution of Medina' (*sabifat al-Madina*), the text of which is only found in Ibn Hisham's redaction of Ibn Ishaq's *Sira nabawiyya*; there those of the Jewish tribes of Medina 'who follow us'²⁹ had been unanimously included into the original *umma*: 'Neither shall they face injustice nor shall their enemies be aided.'³⁰ Conveniently leaving out the further history of the relationship between the Muslims and Jews in Medina, Azad concluded that a covenant with whoever would join in against an overpowering force of evil, in his case with the Hindus, would be 'a religious act [*madhhabi 'amal*] for Muslims'.³¹

It seems as if Azad was indeed using the actual 'caliphate' only as a handy symbolic trigger to political mobilization in the anti-colonialist liberation struggle. Unfortunately, however, things might not be that simple. At no place could any indication be found that Azad had abandoned his earlier view of an axiomatic leadership of Muslims; he may rather have changed

²⁶ Q 3 (Āl 'Imrān): 110: *kuntum khayra ummatin ukhrijat li'l-nās* [...]

²⁷ See Abū 'l-Kalām Āzād, *Khuṭbāt-i Āzād*, ed. n.n., Delhi: Urdū Kitābghar, 1959, pp. 36f. (presidential address to the All-India Khilafat Conference on 25 October 1921 in Agra).

²⁸ 'So hearken not to those who deny [(the truth): *al-mukadhdhibin*]. Their desire is that thou shouldst be pliant: so would they be pliant. Heed not the type of despicable men,—ready with oaths, a slanderer, going about with calumnies, [habitually] hindering [all] good [*al-khayr*], transgressing beyond bounds, deep in sin, violent [and cruel]—with all that, base-born—because he possesses wealth and [numerous] sons. When to him are rehearsed Our Signs, "Tales of the ancients", he cries! Soon shall We brand [the beast] on the snout [*'ala 'l-khurtum*]!" (trans. Yusuf Ali).

²⁹ 'Abd al-Malik ibn Hishām, *al-Sira al-nabawiyya*, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqqā et al., 4 vols. in 2, Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1375/1955 (2nd edition), vol. II, p. 503.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Āzād, *Khuṭbāt*, p. 42.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

perspective for pragmatic reasons: the decolonization of British India could not be achieved by Muslims alone. Even after a successful completion of the anti-colonialist struggle Muslims would still be in a minority situation, in which Azad did not consider it reasonable to claim political leadership for themselves. This, however, did not mean that Muslims would be deprived of their privilege to 'enjoin the good and prevent the evil'.³² While they should not claim sole political leadership, they would have to impress by an exceptionally high moral integrity and in this way still fulfil their axiomatic leadership as moral examples. The caliphate, one is compelled to conclude, would therefore continue beyond the historical institution, by then officially abolished by the Atatürk-led Grand National Assembly of Turkey: it would pass over into a moral guardianship of the Muslim collective. In this point lies a certain parallel to the conceptions of the third protagonist, the mastermind of Islamism Sayyid Abu 'l-A'la Mawdudi, although it will be shown that for him Azad did not go anywhere near far enough.

SAYYID ABU 'L-A'LA MAWDUDI

Mawdudi was born in Deccani Awrangabad in 1903, into the family of an Aligarh-trained advocate, and underwent a rather modern early education, thus growing somehow out of the social stratum of educated Muslim laymen that was very much affected by the emotive rhetoric of the Khilafat Movement. Consequently, he joined his elder brother in editing various local political Urdu journals, before he was co-opted, in 1921, by the Jam'iyyat al-'Ulama'-i Hind, the political body of the 'ulama' from North Indian Deoband, to oversee the publication of its Urdu journal *Muslim*, and, between 1925 and 1928, *al-Jam'iyya*.³³

His own personal engagement in the Khilafat Movement was perhaps one of the core reasons why he was so disappointed by the eventual outcome of the movement. Still very active in the Khilafat circles even after the decline of the movement, and very aware of the growing communal tension in British India in general and the Independence Movement in particular, he viewed Azad's conception of an ethical 'people's caliphate' very sceptically; for him, Azad's normatively grounded claim for the axiomatic leader-

³² See, for example, Q 3 (Āl 'Imrān): 110.

³³ For Mawdūdī's biography see Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism*, New York *et al.*: Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 9–46; critically on Nasr's selection of sources in this one point see Hartung, *System of Life*.

ship of the Muslims, rooted in their ethical superiority, and his acknowledgement of the political and social reality in the subcontinent that would grant non-Muslims the majority in an eventual parliamentary democracy stood in clear contradiction to each other. In Mawdudi's eyes Muslims could not execute their ethical leadership under non-Muslim rule; the ethical and the political had become too closely linked for him in the course of the evolution of his systematic outline, which was basically complete by 1940.³⁴

In retrospect, Mawdudi claimed that the Khilafat Movement was doomed from the moment that the historical caliphate was abolished by the new political establishment in Turkey, thus reducing the caliphate from a proper integrative symbol to a mere hollow phrase.³⁵ This could not be mended by the attempts of Muhammad 'Ali and others to find a suitable alternative to the Ottoman sultan as religious-political leader of all Muslims. Therefore, if the concept of the 'caliphate' was to maintain any significance at all, it needed to be thoroughly reconsidered in the light of the authoritative texts, first and foremost the Qur'an, for Mawdudi the unaltered word of a nonhuman agent and therefore much more binding than even the Sunna of the Prophet.³⁶ In the Qur'an, of course, the word does not speak of the historical succession to Muhammad in the religious and political leadership of the Muslim community, the so-called *khilafat rasul allah*. For Mawdudi all the relevant verses refer to God establishing a clear hierarchy in authority between Himself as creator and his creation. Hence the 'caliph' of whom the Qur'an speaks in verses such as 2:30—'I will appoint a *khalifa* on earth'³⁷—is

one who, in a certain dominion [*milk*], exercises the powers [*ikhtiyarat*] conferred upon him in the capacity of a deputy [*na'ib ki haythiyyat*]. A *khalifa* is no master [*malik*] [by himself], but basically the Master's deputy. His powers are not essentially [*dhati*] his, but were bestowed to him by [his] Master. In reality, he cannot act on his own intent, but his works are entirely done on the Master's purport.³⁸

³⁴ For an in-depth analysis of Mawdudi's system of thought see Hartung, *System of Life*.

³⁵ See Sayyid Abū 'l-A'lá Mawdūdī, *Jamā'at-i islāmī ke untīs sāl*, Lahore: Islāmīk Pablikeshanz, 1997, pp. 6f.

³⁶ See Sayyid Abū 'l-A'lá Mawdūdī, *Qur'ān ki chār bunyādī iṣṭilāḥen*, Delhi: Markazī Maktaba-yi Islāmī, 1996 (7th edition), p. 8; also Sayyid Abū 'l-A'lá Mawdūdī, *Tafhīm al-qur'ān*, 4 vols., Lahore: Idāra-yi Tarjumān al-Qur'ān, 1949–72, vol. I, pp. 13–24.

³⁷ Q 2 (al-Baqara): 30: *innī jā'ilun fi'l-arḍ khalīfatun*.

³⁸ Mawdūdī, *Tafhīm*, vol. I, p. 62.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

Thus Mawdudi stressed the primary meaning of 'caliphate' as *khilafat allah* as distinct from the mundane adaptation as *khilafat rasul allah*, a differentiation which can already be found almost six centuries earlier in Ibn Khaldun's famous *Muqaddima*³⁹ and—not so long ago—in Muhammad 'Abduh and Rashid Rida's *Tafsir al-manar*.⁴⁰ The difference to Mawdudi, however, was that by then there was no longer an acknowledged caliphate in succession to the Prophet, which is why Mawdudi could indeed emphasize the *khilafat allah* as the only one that could still have any meaning at all. Thus, while he partially echoed Azad's idea of the collective caliphate of those 'who believe and work righteous deeds',⁴¹ Mawdudi did not abandon the firm belief in the faithful Muslims' entitlement to political leadership, regardless their actual number. As unrealistic as this appears, it was nonetheless consistent with his ambitious project to establish 'Islam' as a coherent and selfreferential 'System of Life' (*nizam-i zindagi*), as he has called it. To this end he was in the first place concerned not so much with the political realities in late colonial India or elsewhere as with the development of a political ideology that—as is the very nature of ideologies—claimed spatial and temporal invariant, and thus absolute, validity. At its core was the idea of an idealized and deterritorialized Islamic state (*hukumat-i islami*), run collectively by the righteous Muslim community (*jama'at*), the best one that God had brought forth among mankind, or, in other words the *khulafa' allah*. In Mawdudi's conception there would be no room for active participation by non-Muslims in the government, as Azad had opted for, but non-Muslims would be treated as *dhimmi* at best, or *kuffar* at worst.⁴²

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, an attempt at systematization seems in place. The three figures that have been selected here appear almost as ideal-typical representatives of

³⁹ See 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima li'l-'Allāma Ibn Khaldūn*, ed. Aḥmad ibn Sa'īd al-Fāṣī, Cairo: al-Bulāq, 1320 AH, p. 181.

⁴⁰ See al-Sayyid al-Imām Muḥammad Rashīd Ridā, *Tafsir al-qur'ān al-ḥakīm al-mashhūr bi-Tafsir al-manār*, ed. Ibrāhīm Shams al-Dīn, 12 vols., Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1420/1999, vol. I, pp. 209–17.

⁴¹ Q 24 (al-Nūr): 55: amanū minkum wa-'amilū al-ṣāliḥāt. (see above, n 3). See Mawdudi's interpretation of this verse in his *Tafhim*, vol. III, pp. 417–20; Sayyid Abū 'l-A'la Mawdūdī, *Khilāfat wa mulūkiyyat*, Delhi: Markazī Maktaba-yi Islāmī, 1997, pp. 33f.

⁴² See Sayyid Abū 'l-A'la Mawdūdī, *Islāmī ḥukūmat men ghayr-musalmānōn ke ḥuqūq*, Delhi: Markazī Maktaba-yi Islāmī, 1993.

different ideas of the 'caliphate' among Muslim intellectual elites in British India in the first few decades of the twentieth century. One dividing-line runs between a focus on the historical caliphate in the succession to Muhammad, since 1517 held—at least nominally—by the Ottoman sultans, and a more abstract theological notion which refers to a hierarchical relationship between God and man as part of His creation. A second line, however, runs between the caliphate as a political institution in the first place and as an expression of firm belief and, resulting from this, high moral integrity.

For Muhammad 'Ali the caliphate appeared to be very much a concrete, religiously coloured, political institution. This institution was to be held by a single individual who would then serve as head of a religiouspolitical superstructure, the global Muslim *umma*. This was not rooted in the belief that a transterritorial Islamic state would be the ultimate goal, but rather in the firm conviction that Western colonial dominance over Muslim communities could only be ended by joint action; the 'caliphate' here was first and foremost a handy communal symbol which was not used by Indian Muslims alone, as outlined at the beginning of this chapter.

The success of the Indian Khilafat Movement in terms of mass mobilization was thus not rooted entirely in the appeal to a common and highly emotive symbol, but rather came because this movement combined a variety of smaller movements and pressure groups, many of them distinctively non-Muslim. The prophet of this alliance of convenience was Abu 'l-Kalam 'Azad'. His focus was more on the liberation of India from colonial rule than on the liberation of Muslims wherever they lived. While initially he was very much in favour of pan-Islamic solidarity, epitomized in support for the Ottomans as bearers of the historical caliphate, Azad's rhetoric clearly shifted to an emphasis on national unity, at the latest after the abolition of the caliphate by the Atatürk-led new Turkish parliament. With his recourse to the authoritative sources of Islam to legitimate even long-term joint action with non-Muslims he focused on a secular successor state to the British Raj; by this he clearly demonstrated a pragmatic awareness of the fact that a state based on secularism was most likely to safeguard the religious freedom of minority groups. Like other Muslim community leaders after him,⁴³ Azad was nonetheless convinced that Muslims in a secular

⁴³ One of those was Sayyid Abu 'l-Hasan 'Ali Hasani Nadwi (d. 1420/1999), then head (*nazim*) of the Lucknow-based National Council of [Sunni] Muslim Scholars (*Nadwat al-'Ulama*). See Hartung, *Viele Wege*, pp. 155, 165–70, 370f., and 391–401.

Indian Republic would hold an elevated position, because it would be they who would set an extraordinarily high ethical benchmark, as promised by God in the Qur'an. In this way, being the best of communities created among mankind, they would still be maintaining the *khilafa* as the righteous ones' trusteeship of God on earth.

While certainly agreeing with Azad's understanding of the Muslim community as the most morally exemplary one, Mawdudi, who only began to write seriously about a decade later, did not share the societal solution striven for by Azad. For him, moral superiority would also entitle the *umma* to political leadership, regardless of their status as a religious minority in the subcontinent. Thus, while following Azad's implicit notion of a collective *khilafat allah*, with regard to the political role that he envisioned Muslims playing in a decolonised society Mawdudi appeared much closer to the ideas of Muhammad 'Ali. But on the other hand, Mawdudi's ideas, although most certainly inspired by the Khilafat Movement of the 1920s, were almost entirely devoid of any acknowledgement of the actual social and political realities; thus his idea of a collective *khilafa*—the cornerstone to what he had labelled a 'theo-democracy' (*jumhuriyyat-i ilahi*) as the ideal of a trans-territorial Islamic polity⁴⁴—remained completely theoretical. What seems significant is that of all the three notions of the 'caliphate' discussed here it is Mawdudi's normatively grounded one that, embedded in a political ideology, appears to have survived into our days, appropriated wholly or in part by various Islamist thinkers and groups across the globe.

⁴⁴ See Sayyid Abū 'l-A'lá Mawdūdī, *Islām kā naẓariyya-yi siyāsī*, Delhi: Markazī Maktaba-yi Islāmī, 1972, p. 25.

MUSTAFA KEMAL'S ABROGATION OF THE OTTOMAN CALIPHATE AND ITS IMPACT ON THE INDONESIAN NATIONALIST MOVEMENT*

Chiara Formichi

In the context of the Dutch East Indies—Indonesia—the abrogation of the Ottoman caliphate in 1924 is usually assessed in terms of its impact on developments related to political Islam, and particularly as a reflection of the Khilafat Movement in British India.¹ Focusing on discussions of the cali-

* This chapter was written during my Post-Doctoral Fellowship at the Asia Research Institute (ARI), National University of Singapore, and it is part of a larger comparative research on secularization and the re-emergence of Islam in Indonesia and Turkey (undertaken at City University of Hong Kong). The necessary research for this chapter was supported by a grant awarded by the British Academy-funded collaborative research project 'Islam, Trade and Politics across the Indian Ocean', administered by the Association of South-East Asian Studies in the United Kingdom and the British Institute at Ankara.

Although 'Indonesia' as a political reality was still to be formed, Bob Elson has amply demonstrated that 'the idea of Indonesia' was already well established in the early 1920s, and it is in this sense that I use the term throughout this chapter. See Robert E. Elson, *The Idea of Indonesia: A History*, Cambridge University Press, 2008.

¹ Martin van Bruinessen, 'Muslims of the Dutch East Indies and the Caliphate Question', *Studia Islamika*, 2, 3 (1995), 115–40; Michael Francis Laffan, *Islamic Nation-*

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

phate and Mustafa Kemal's reforms in the Indonesian press from the 1920s to the 1940s, and setting them against the backdrop of the debates that were to accompany the shaping of Indonesia as a non-confessional state in 1945,² in this contribution I suggest that the transformation of the Ottoman empire into the modern Turkish Republic was more relevant to the formulation of secular nationalism than to the revival of pan-Islamic trends.³ Pan-Islamism, in fact, tended to develop in closer connection to religiously inspired nationalism than to international phenomena.

In this chapter, then, I wish to shift attention away from discussions on how Muslims in Indonesia attempted to reinstate the caliphate—which is well addressed in the literature but is relatively under-representative of post-abrogation debates—and towards the collateral consequences of Mustafa Kemal's historic move instead.

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE OTTOMAN CALIPHATE AND THE DUTCH INDIES AT THE TURN OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

During the second half of the nineteenth century the Ottoman caliph was considered a religious as much as political authority in South-East Asia. As Anthony Reid and Jan Schmidt have argued, the Turkish consuls in Singapore and Batavia were, in the second half of the 1800s, seen by Javanese pilgrims as representatives of the caliph. At the same time, the sultans of Aceh (North Sumatra) and Jambi (Central Sumatra) attempted to gain recognition as part of the Ottoman caliphate—the former more successfully than the latter. As Abdülhamid II launched his pan-Islamic policy, however,

hood and Colonial Indonesia: The Umma Below the Winds, London: Routledge, 2003; Jan Schmidt, *Through the Legation Window, 1876–1926: Four Essays on Dutch, Dutch-Indian and Ottoman History*, Uitgaven van het Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul 68, Istanbul Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut, 1992. On the Khilafat Movement in British India see Jan-Peter Hartung's and Qasim Zaman's contributions in this volume.

² The Republic of Indonesia was proclaimed in 1945, as based on the Pancasila (five principles). Soekarno's vision was a state founded on nationalism, humanitarianism, representativity, social welfare, and belief in One God; although it did not specify one religious tradition above others, this philosophy recognized religion as a founding element of the state, which therefore cannot be labelled 'secular'.

³ A similar observation has been made about Malaya by Anthony Milner; see his 'The Impact of the Turkish Revolution on Malaya', *Archipel*, 31 (1986), 117–130.

colonial authorities in the Indies imposed tighter limitations on South-East Asian Muslims.⁴

According to most of the literature, the creation of a 'caliphate committee' in Surabaya, and the participation of leading members of Indonesia's Islamic organizations in post-abrogation activities, placed the religious anti-colonial movement on a transnational level, setting aside nationalist priorities. The pan-Islamic wave was, however, to end soon, as later congresses showed a fading interest in re-establishing the caliphate; it is on this basis that scholars have argued that the impact of the caliphate's abolition had already disappeared by 1929–30. Van Bruinessen concludes his assessment of the 'caliphate question' by stating that

in 1929, the Sarekat Islam gave up its pan-Islamism in favour of Indonesian nationalism. Muhammadiyah and Nahdatul Ulama, on the other hand, turned their attention to more strictly religious, educational and social concerns ... Neither the congress itself [General Islamic Congress, Jerusalem, 1931] nor pan-Islamic ideas received much attention in the Dutch East Indies any more.⁵

The identification of the caliphate question with pan-Islamism appears to be a fairly myopic view of the issue, especially considering that the 1930s were a period of reshaping, rather than abandonment, of Islamic international politics. As I have argued elsewhere, by the beginning of the decade the Sarekat Islam party 'had completed the shift from viewing pan-Islam as an ideology useful for gathering the necessary support and strength to

⁴ Anthony Reid, 'Nineteenth Century Pan-Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 26, 2 (Feb. 1967), 267–83; Schmidt, *Through the Legation Window*. This is also addressed in the article 'Perhoeboengan Indonesia dengan Turkey', *Pandji Islam*, 33–4 *nomor lebaran ke-I*, 1938, p. 712, written by Bay Turkan Tan of the Turkish newspaper *Cumhuriyet* and translated into Indonesian by Alfian Yoesoef Helmi.

⁵ Van Bruinessen, 'Muslims of the Dutch East Indies', *postscript*. Sarekat Islam was established in 1912 as a traders' association, but quickly developed as the first organization to reach beyond ethnic and regional divisions by calling upon Islam as the common bond of 'Indonesians'. H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto was its key leader (from 1915 until his death in 1934), along with Hadji Agoes Salim; the organization (a party from 1923) espoused a modernist interpretation of Islam and advocated the establishment of an independent state of Indonesia based on Islam. Ahmad Dahlan established Muhammadiyah in 1912 upon his return from Mecca with the goal of 'purifying' Indonesian Islam from innovation and local traditions. Nahdatul Ulama was established in 1926 by Hasjim Asjari to counter the impact of the modernist Muhammadiyah and protect the Shafi'i tradition of Java. Both kept mostly away from politics, focusing instead on their social mission.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

achieve Indonesia's national independence, to advocating Islamic nationalism as a step towards the worldwide unification of the *ummah*, an approach further strengthened in the 1940s through the impact of Japan's pan-Asian rhetoric.⁶

From then on a modified understanding of pan-Islamism prevailed, neither centred on Turkey nor aimed at the recreation of the caliphate as a religious–political institution, but rather focused on achieving independence from the colonial master. And this developed in parallel to the gradual transformation of Mustafa Kemal's reforms into a model for secularist leaders to follow, opening a new dimension of the debate between secular and religious nationalists.

KEMAL IN INDONESIA: MILITARY VICTORIES, ANTI-EUROPEANISM, AND PROGRESS

It is hardly surprising that in 1924 Indonesian periodicals were filled with articles on the abrogation of the caliphate, the 'caliphate congresses', Sharif Husayn's claims, Britain's involvement, and the Saudi expansion in the Arabian Peninsula. Less obvious is the press' reception of the events that preceded and followed the end of the Ottoman caliphate. After Kemal's military success in 1922–3, and his abolition of the sultanate and caliphate, his political effort shifted towards the 'modernization' of society, the state, and the economy; and these changes were reflected in Indonesian periodicals.⁷

As briefly noted by Laffan, Mustafa Kemal's victories against the Greeks, and his relationship with the Sultan, positively impressed Indonesian intellectuals, to the extent that in 1923 newspapers across the board were hailing him as their hero.⁸ A few months earlier the first issue of Sarekat Islam's

⁶ Chiara Formichi, 'Pan-Islam and Religious Nationalism: The Case of Kartosuwiryo and the Negara Islam Indonesia', *Indonesia*, 90 (Oct. 2010), 125–46, p. 134. A wider assessment of pan-Islam and religious nationalism in 20th century Indonesia is at the core of Chiara Formichi, *Islam and the Making of the Nation: Kartosuwiryo and Political Islam in 20th century Indonesia*, Leiden: KITLV, 2012.

⁷ Periodicals were chosen by virtue of their political and ethnic affiliations, focusing on the period 1922–40, and within the limits of the National Library of Indonesia's (PNRI) holdings. See 'Note on Periodicals' at the end of this chapter.

⁸ 'Moestafa Kemal Pasja Pahlawan Islam', *Doenia Islam*, 2, 12 January 1923, pp. 7–8; 'Moestafa Kemal Pahlawan Islam', *Oetoesan Hindia*, 17, 2, 25 January 1923; 'Hindia Timoer: Moestafa Kemal Pasja Bernikah', *Oetoesan Hindia*, extra, 2 March 1923,

bulletin *Doenia Islam* had featured this Ottoman army commander in its 'leadership' column, giving him the Javanese appellation *senopati*, also a sobriquet for the first Sultan of Mataram.⁹ Just as the Khilafat Movement in British India endorsed Kemal's reforms by arguing that the sultanate was not hereditary and should not be retained by one family, *Bintang Islam* encouraged Javanese Muslims not to wait around for the 'Arabs' to take a position, but instead to join Maulana Habibur-Rahman in his appeal for support for the 'Renewer of the Caliphate' (that is, Kemal) and his effort to redraft Turkish laws according to *shari'a*.¹⁰ In January 1923 the secular *Darmokondo* published an article on four Turkish heroes: Ghazi 'the conqueror' Mustafa Kemal Pasha was followed by Ismet Pasha, Rafet Pasha, and Riza Nur Bey. Admiration soon merged with the reality of a modern and materialistic society: *Doenia Islam* announced the sale of framed pictures of Mustafa Kemal,¹¹ and *Bintang Hindia* printed advertisements for a watch-maker in Semarang—possibly an Arab—selling his watches branded 'Mustafa Kemal Pasha Tiger of Islam'.¹²

With very few exceptions, the state and fate of Islam were heavily marginalized, especially by the religious press. When Mustafa Kemal married Latifa, in 1923, Sarekat Islam's *Oetoesan Hindia* and the conservative *Bintang Islam* both ignored the fact that she did not wear any head covering, while the 'progressive' *Bintang Hindia* stressed this point, singling her out as 'the first woman who dared to show her face in public'. Perhaps attempting to strike a balance, *Medan Moeslimin* explained that Latifa's choice of wearing 'sportive clothing' was to be seen in the light of her dedication in accompanying her husband to the battlefield.¹³ These different comments

p. 1; 'Pahlawan Moestafa Kemal Pasja dengan Njonjanja', *Bintang Hindia*, 18, 15 May 1923, p. 274. Also, see Laffan, *Islamic Nationhood*, pp. 210–14.

⁹ 'Pimpinian: Moestafa Kemal Pasja', *Doenia Islam*, *tjontoh*, 29 December 1922, pp. 9–10.

¹⁰ Amroe, 'Terima Kasih pada kaoem Kemal', *Bintang Islam*, 4, 20 March 1923, pp. 65–7.

¹¹ 'Sheriffah & Sons, Batavia: Ada Sedia Portre Moestafa Kemal Pasja', *Doenia Islam*, 2, 12 January 1923, p. 15.

¹² 'Pahlawan Angora', *Darmokondo*, 9, 31 January 1923, p. 1; 'Ghazi' is also used in *Bintang Islam*, 9, 20 May 1923, p. 198–9; 'Pernikahannja Saiful Islam wa Mudjad-dad-i-Chilafat', *Bintang Islam*, 7, 10 May 1923, pp. 148–9; *Bintang Hindia*, 50, 12 December 1925, cover.

¹³ 'Pahlawan Moestafa Kemal Pasja dengan Njonjanja'; 'Pernikahannja Saiful Islam wa

on the images of Latifa are a valuable key to a better understanding of the position of these periodicals. Sarekat Islam was a modernist organization which, regardless of its relatively adaptive and receptive character, advocated adherence to Islamic laws and the establishment of a government in compliance with the scriptures, juggling between nationalism and pan-Islam; for it, therefore, there was no doubt that women should cover their heads. At the opposite side of the spectrum were the secular media, *Bintang Hindia* prevailing over them all with its mission statement of propagating Western modernity in Indonesia.¹⁴ Lastly, the editor of *Medan Moeslimin*, Hadji Misbach, was the best representative of Islamo-socialism; he was also known as ‘the red Hadji’, as since his early days in the 1910s he had supported a communist vision of Islam, and it is arguable that within this paradigm women’s veiling was considered situational.

As news of the abrogation of the caliphate reached Indonesia the press shifted its attention to the state of the Ottoman caliphate and speculations on the future of Islamic leadership. While religious periodicals were mostly concerned with these aspects and the political developments in the Arabian Peninsula, the Chinese newspaper *Keng Po* became increasingly interested in the different aspects of Kemal’s reforms, from the prohibition on wearing the fez and the new family laws—an issue also taken up by *Darmokondo*—to the general reaction of Turkish Islamic groups to the reforms, the state of Christian schools, and the flow of news and books from Turkey into Indonesia. The apex of *Keng Po*’s interest in Kemal was the regular advertising of a book on his life, ‘The story of Mustafa Kemal Pasha’.¹⁵

In the 1930s Turkey was to become the symbol of modernity and progress, especially in opposition to Western and European models. Perhaps a

Mudjaddad-i-Chilafat’, ‘Istri Moestafa Kemal Pasja’, *Medan Moeslimin*, 9, 1 May 1923, pp. 142–3; ‘Hindia Timoer: Moestafa Kemal Pasja Bernikah’.

¹⁴ For example, see ‘Doenia istri: Pergerakan Perempuan di Negeri Turkije’, *Bintang Hindia*, 46, 15 November 1924.

¹⁵ ‘Hapoeskan Fez’, *Keng Po*, 189 (2), 19 March 1924, p. 3; ‘Turkye: Pergerakan Agama’, *Keng Po*, 217 (2), 26 April 1924, p. 2; ‘Toerkije: Sekola Christen di Toerkie’, *Keng Po*, 363 (2), 22 October 1924, p. 3; ‘Hindia Nederland: Turkye di Nederland Indie’, *Keng Po*, 228 (3), 12 May 1924, p. 1; ‘Loear Hindia: Atoeran nikah di Toerkie’, *Keng Po*, 385 (2), 18 November 1924, p. 3; ‘Perkawinan di Toerki’, *Darmokondo*, 104, 13 December 1924, p. 1; ‘Doenia istri: Pergerakan Perempuan di Negeri Turkije’. The announcement ‘Advert no. 453, Riwayat Moestafa Kemal Basja’ first appeared on *Keng Po*, 338, 20 September 1924, p. 3.

first sign of this trend can be seen in a *Bintang Hindia* article published in mid-1926 under the title 'A Kemal from Poland'. The article, featuring a large picture of Kemal,¹⁶ compared him to Marshal Pilsudski, as military commanders who had halted a foreign invasion and brought political change; in a sense, Kemal had become the yardstick of political transformation and nationalist affirmation. In the mid-1930s then, when news from Turkey had become sparser because of the economic crisis and a slowdown in the reforms, the nationalist Soetomo helped refresh that image of Turkey, suggesting that Indonesians should 'mirror' its path if they truly wanted to achieve a good level of industrialization and literacy.¹⁷

Soetomo had graduated from the Medical School in Amsterdam and had a Dutch wife, and the mission statement of his Parindra (Partai Indonesia Rakyat) party spoke of the achievement of a glorious independent Indonesia through economic and social empowerment of the masses.¹⁸ When defining 'Kemalism' in 1937 Dr Soetomo pointed to those elements that he deemed crucial to the emergence of Indonesia as an independent nation-state: the modernization and industrialization of an agricultural country, the education of the masses, and the defence of national independence.¹⁹ The term, however, had already been introduced in Indonesia in 1929, and as far as the sources consulted indicate, its first appearances were in relation to the switch from the Arabic to the Latin alphabet, and more generally to 'secularism' (see below).²⁰

The term 'Kemalism' had been initially used by Western authors, and had only later picked up momentum in the Turkish context, where the ensemble of reforms was usually referred to as *Atatürkçülük*. The underpinnings and offshoots of Kemalism are too complex to be addressed here; however, it ought to be noted that throughout the years the term came to collectively define the so-called 'Six Arrows' of Turkey's modernization: republicanism,

¹⁶ 'Satoe Kemal dari Polen', *Bintang Hindia*, 26, 3 July 1926, pp. 426–7.

¹⁷ Dr Soetomo, 'Bertjerminkan Toerki: Model boerderij Kemal Atatürk: "kelebihan" tenaga intelektual Indonesia, karena keadaan masyarakat—Perloe pereubahan', *Darmokondo*, 68, 27 March 1937, p. 1, cols. 4–5.

¹⁸ Susan Abeyasekere, 'Partai Indonesia Raja, 1936–42: A Study in Cooperative Nationalism', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 3, 2 (Sep. 1972), 262–76.

¹⁹ Dr Soetomo, 'Dari Negeri Kemal Atatürk: Toerki Modern', *Darmokondo*, 54, 8 March 1937, p. 1, cols. 1–2.

²⁰ 'Moestafa Kemalisme', *Bintang Hindia*, 4, 26 January 1929, p. 61; S.M. Kartosuwiryo, 'Islam dan Nasionalisme', *Fadjar Asia*, 14 May 1929 (discussed further below).

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

populism, secularism, revolutionism, nationalism, and statism.²¹ Yet in Indonesia the term seems to have become more flexible and narrow at the same time, in the sense that commentators would use it in different, yet specific, senses depending on their overall approach to Kemal's reforms.

KEMALISM AND ISLAM: BETWEEN CONDEMNATION AND ADMIRATION

In the aftermath of the abolition of the sultanate Turkey adopted the structure of the secular state, rather than another form of Islamic government; reforms reshaping Turkish society, education, and the legal system quickly followed suit until November 1928, when the constitutional clause sanctioning Islam as official religion of the state was abrogated. The steady flow of comments and news on the Hijaz, the Russo-Turkish confrontation, and the fate of the caliphate came to a gradual stop as the editors' interest shifted towards the 'new Turkey', and their ideological standing on domestic politics was soon to spill into their understanding of these dramatic changes abroad. Between 1926 and 1929 the Indonesian press was flooded with articles related to Kemal's reforms, some supporting and others criticizing these developments.

In January 1926 *Bintang Hindia* reported Kemal's words: 'Throw away everything which is truly old ... even your ancestors' heirlooms, if it hinders progress and lowers our standing in the world,' arguing that real change was not in forbidding the fez or the veil, but rather in Kemal's promotion of local workers, girls' schooling, and a republican government. However, *Medan Moeslimin* held the opposite view: 'Besides talks of Turkey's military victories, there is much talk of Turkey's speedy reforms and progress, these days. This is why people say: a new Turkey. However, it's not its economy or politics which is being reformed, but just its clothes, in accordance with the trend of the moment and general needs.'²²

Beginning in July 1926 *Darmokondo*, *Medan Moeslimin*, and *Bintang Hindia* were regularly publishing on the prohibition of the veil and fez for civil servants, the propaganda encouraging change from the Arabic to the

²¹ Enver Ziya Karal, 'The Principle of Kemalism', in Ali Kazancigil and E. Özbudun (eds), *Atatürk: Founder of a Modern State*, London: Hurst, 1981, 11–35.

²² 'Kroniek: Turkey Baroe', *Bintang Hindia*, 4, 23 January 1926, pp. 57–8; 'Turkij Baroe', *Medan Moeslimin*, 11, 10 April 1926, p. 161.

Roman alphabet, the reform of family laws (including laws on inheritance, marriage, and divorce, in favour of women's equality with men), and the transformation of the Aya Sofia mosque into a museum. Comments were enlightening in their scarcity. Although Kemal's resistance against Europe had been framed in the past as the symbol of anti-Westernism, in 1927 *Bintang Hindia* praised his effort to emulate the West and to endorse 'nationalism'—defined here as an imported by-product of European presence in the East—to politically advance his country without letting this sentiment outgrow its benefits, as was happening in India and China, where anti-Westernism had spread to all aspects of society.²³

While some Javanese showed their admiration for Kemal by naming their sons after him,²⁴ the Islamic press had become suspicious of his political agenda. *Penerangan Islam* directly accused him of 'having gone crazy with power', being on a rampage to eliminate all of his enemies in order to establish his own royal dynasty, his own sultanate: 'so cry the news we have received from *al-Ahram* [possibly the Egyptian newspaper], saying that the Turkish republican government will change, will return to be a monarchy, which Mustafa will start, the King who oppresses religion till its own freedom'.²⁵

Criticism of Kemal's leadership would become dominant in 1940, but opposition to his anti-religious policies had been freely expressed since 1929. *Fadjar Asia*—another Sarekat Islam bulletin, more radical than *Doe-ania Islam* and *Oetoesan Hindia*—published first 'A new religion in the old capital of Islam',²⁶ and next 'Islam and nationalism', in which it referred to 'Kemalism' as the religion of the Devil, secularism; as the Ottoman empire was gradually transformed into a secular state, and plans for the reinstatement of the caliphate sank, these reforms came to be used as a symbolic referent in the debate on religion and the state:

Slowly but surely those in power in Turkey, namely the Kemalists, constantly try with their ignorance to destroy the authority of Islam, which had centuries ago become the power-base of the Turkish people and the compass of life for millions

²³ 'Kroniek: Toerkje Baroe', *Bintang Hindia*, 7, 12 February, 1927, pp. 77–8.

²⁴ 'Kemal Mahisa Sastroamidjojo', *Bintang Hindia*, 13, 26 March 1928, p. 215; 'Kemal Mahisa', *Darmokondo*, 66, 27 March 1928, p. 2.

²⁵ 'Bakal Moestafa Kamal Pacha gila kekoeasaan?', *Penerangan Islam*, 5?, pp. 175–9 (front page damaged, s.d.).

²⁶ 'Igama baroe didalam iboe kota Islam jang kala', *Fadjar Asia*, 112, 23 May 1929, pp. 1–3.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

of Turks; they are coarsely trying to set Islam aside and adopt instead foreign ideals, which are mundane ones ... Now, in Turkey they have made *halal* that which is *haram* for Islam ... we do not agree with the Kemalist effort to Turkify the words uttered during prayer, especially the *fatiha*. And now we stand, to protest with our bodies and souls, because Islam is being erased by men in Turkey ... is this Nationalism for the Kemalists? ... nationalism is a generic collective feeling which includes in its count a 'nation' which, if its features are already defined, then it has a political body called 'state'; but truly the nationalism of the Kemalists is deviated, that nationalism has already become the cause of Islam's endangerment in Turkey.²⁷

At the turn of the decade the pace of reports from Turkey had slowed down, and at this stage the secular newspapers appeared to be making an effort to underline Kemal's dedication to Islam and the Ottomans' wickedness. At the end of Ramadan in 1930 *Darmokondo* ran a piece supporting Kemal's policies towards religion: highlighting the 'extraordinary' attendance at mosques, the author noted Kemal's order to provide food while the imams were reading and explaining the Qur'an: 'This is evidence that what some people say about Turkey and Mustafa Kemal abandoning Islam and the Qur'an is not true.'²⁸ A few months later *Darmokondo* dedicated a full page to a story on the sultan's harem and his Circassian concubines, who—the editorial argued—should be blamed for the collapse of the Ottoman empire: 'if we do some research ... the fall of the Ottoman Empire in Turkey was caused by nothing else but the influence of the evil spirits of these women (but please reader, do not deride Islam for polygamy. Do not blame Islam, but blame the believer because he did not study the ins and outs and the correct way).' Concluding with the tale of how a sultan had thrown a concubine out of a window, the author commented: 'This was the level of ignorance at the time of Turkey's Sultans. Fortunately for Turkey, Gazi Mustafa Kemal Pasha expelled the Sultans, who were truly evil towards women.'²⁹

The press had already painted a picture of Turkey as a modern and independent country on its way towards industrialization, literacy, and women's emancipation, but in the mid-1930s Soekarno changed the framing of these developments, arguing that this progress was the direct consequence of separating state and religion.

Most importantly, Soekarno understood Kemal's secularization as the 'liberation of religion' from the state; yet it ought to be stressed that the true

²⁷ S.M. Kartosuwiryo, 'Islam dan Nasionalisme'.

²⁸ 'Loear Pagar: Boelan Ramelan di Toerki', *Darmokondo*, 77 (2), 5 April 1930, p. 1.

²⁹ 'Rahsia Sulthan-Sulthan Toerkey', *Darmokondo*, 160, 17 July 1930, pp. 1–2.

nature of Kemalist ideology was—as Hakan Yavuz bluntly defined it—‘a Jacobin form of social engineering’ in which the state, far from being neutral, strictly controlled and removed from the public sphere all manifestations of religion.³⁰ If according to *Fadjar Asia* ‘Kemalism’ was understood as the erosion of Islamic values to the advantage of the Western concept of nationalism—that is, patriotism and materialism—to Soekarno these reforms were a sign of Islam’s ability to renovate itself and adapt to new historical and social contexts. To Soekarno the desire to shape a post-colonial nation on the mould of ninth-tenth century Arabia—his understanding of an Islamic state—was the worst possible hindrance to the achievement of independence.

The nationalist leader and president-to-be Soekarno was arrested in 1930 for anti-colonial activities, and sent to exile at Endeh on Flores. Here he became engaged in an epistolary exchange with Ahmad Hassan, leader of the Bandung literalist organization Persatuan Islam (Persis).³¹ In these letters, written between 1934 and 1936, Soekarno had made no secret of his deeply felt yet basically agnostic religiosity, and had thus embarked on a spiritual journey to further his religious knowledge. His correspondence with Hassan shows his understanding of the theological underpinnings of what he considered Islamic societies’ backwardness, as well as his appreciation for Turkey, Afghanistan and Egypt, as Muslim nations that had succeeded in overcoming their traditions. Soekarno could see no future for those who did not separate religion and government, and Kemal’s Turkey represented his ultimate model.³²

For Soekarno religious orthodoxy—interpreted as returning to the glory of Islam and manifested in the implementation of Islamic laws—was the very reason for Western supremacy over Muslim populations. In 1936 he argued that Muslims should apply *qiyas* to ‘get rid of past traditions’ and take up new ones, because ‘to be modern, hyper-modern, has not been

³⁰ M. Hakan Yavuz, ‘The Case of Turkey’, *Daedalus*, 132, 3, On Secularism and Religion (Summer 2003), 59–61.

³¹ Persis had been established in 1923 in Bandung by two Hajjis, and Ahmad Hassan took control of the organization within a couple of years; since its inception Persis has advocated a literalist interpretation of Islam.

³² Soekarno’s letters were first published by Persis press in late 1936 as *Surat-surat Islam dari Endeh dari Ir Soekarno kepada T. M. Hassan goeroe ‘Persatoean Islami’*, and later reprinted together with his other articles and speeches in *Dibawah Bendera Revolusi*. See Soekarno, ‘Surat-surat Islam dari Endeh’, in *Dibawah Bendera Revolusi*, Jakarta: Panitia Penerbit Dibawah Bendera Revolusi, 1963.

declared *haram* by Allah or the Prophet.³³ Taking as an example the case of Arab *‘ulama* who had forced Ibn Sa‘ud to tear down the tower of Radio Medina, Soekarno argued that it had been this attitude of ‘being ancient and stupid, and indecent, that caused many not to understand the legislative necessity of several innovative rules implemented by Kemal Ataturk, Reza Khan Pahlavi, or Josif Stalin!³⁴ And in fact, it is the fight against backward orthodoxy and conservatism ‘that Kemal Ataturk means, when he says: “Islam does not order men to sit pondering every day in the mosque turning the *tasbih*, but Islam is a battle ... Islam is progress!”³⁵

As controversial as this might have sounded to those testing Soekarno’s religious credentials, he wrote:

We live according to Islam, we perform Islamic commemorations, we implement Islamic ideology, and we are limited by the desire to copy 100% all conditions and things from the time of the Prophet, and the great Caliphs. But we don’t remember that that society was not silent, nor fixed or ‘dead’—it was ‘alive’, dynamic, in constant change, progress, and revolution ... the conservatives declare anything new to be *kafir*, then what is it Islam? Dates and the *jubbah*? Should we go by camel, and eat without spoons, like at the time of the Prophet and the Caliphs? These are those who become angry when they hear about the new directives in Turkey, Iran, Egypt, or other Islamic countries in the West. Islam is progress ... progress is *fardu*, it is *sunna* ... progress means *making* new things, new *creations*—not copying old ones. Even in Islamic politics, people cannot copy old things, cannot desire to copy the time of the Caliphs ... but what is it that we take from the words of Allah and the *sunna* of the Prophet? Not its *fire*, nor its *flame*, but its *smoke* and *ashes*.³⁶

Hassan’s letters in reply to Soekarno were not available to this author; however, as the conversation in 1940 revolved around similar issues it is possible to imagine how he might have reacted. Hassan’s criticism was directed towards Soekarno and Kemal’s hypocrisy, which he identifies with a good dose of sarcasm; Soekarno had strongly condemned the repetition of older models, as *taqlid* was to him the very reason for Islam’s backwardness, yet he suggested implementing the model of Turkish leadership and government: drinking alcohol, dancing with women, allowing women’s bodies to be measured for beauty contests, allowing girls and boys to mix,

³³ Soekarno, Letter no. 8, 22 February 1936.

³⁴ Soekarno, Letter no. 9, 22 April 1936.

³⁵ Soekarno, Letter no. 8.

³⁶ Soekarno, Letter no. 11, 18 August 1936 (italics in original text).

dance, work, play around, act in films, wear tight clothes, and drink champagne, this was indeed the way to achieve progress!³⁷

Even though Soetomo had avoided discussing religious reforms, directing attention towards industrialization, education and women's rights, in his last contribution in 1937 he addressed the abolition of the caliphate. Without denying that at first sight the reforms in the last fifteen years would suggest that the Turkish people had left Islam behind, Soetomo defended Kemal's policies, reiterating how the sultans had corrupted religious costumes and were despots, as proved by the imposition of the red fez, originally a Greek habit. Kemal's lifting of this symbol of a past tyranny matched the people's desire to be called Turks instead of Greeks or Hellenics in order to affirm their national identity, as in Indonesia they wanted to be called *Indonesier* rather than *Inlanders*.³⁸

Probably as a follow-up to this article, in June 1937 Soetomo delivered a speech in Surabaya on the subject of Islam in Turkey, later printed in the Medan-based periodical *Pandji Islam*. Soetomo opened his speech by arguing that although 'Indonesia is the largest Muslim country ... the Islamic country which best follows the will of Prophet Muhammad is Turkey ... the Turkish people are the Muslim people which carry out the Islamic way most seriously'. This statement had as a corollary the regular repertoire of Soetomo's accounts: Turkey's compliance with international laws, the abolition of polygamy, widespread education, eradication of corruption, the substitution of Arab names and words with Turkish ones, and absolute modernization—these were all small steps towards the emancipation of religion from the state. Kemal's secularization reforms meant to Soetomo that 'in regards to religion, the state does not meddle with it', repeating Soekarno's mistake.³⁹

In a way recognizing the weakness of Soetomo's arguments, in 1938, after Kemal's death, *Pandji Islam* published a series of four articles on Islam in Turkey, authored by its regular correspondent reporting from Istanbul, Alfian Yoesoef Helmi, later to become Indonesian Ambassador to Turkey. These articles had the explicit intention of 'rectifying false news about Turkey' and solving 'the puzzle' of Turkey's abandonment of Islam, as Soetomo's contri-

³⁷ M.S., 'Memboedakkan Pengertian Islam I', *al-Lisaan*, 48 (June 1940), 17–23; M.S., 'Memboedakkan Pengertian Islam II', *al-Lisaan*, 48 (June 1940), 34–9.

³⁸ Dr Soetomo, 'Apakah bangsa Toerki boekan Moeslimin? Penghapoesan Kalifah dan tarboes merah: Agama Islam dalam Toerki baroe', *Darmokondo*, 86, 19 April 1937, p. 1, cols. 4–5.

³⁹ Dr Soetomo, 'Negeri Toerki dan Islam', *Pandji Islam*, 18, 25 June 1937, pp. 175–6.

butions had been ‘unsatisfying’. This preamble notwithstanding, Helmi’s arguments, longer and richer in detail, did not change the picture depicted by Soetomo, and reiterated two years later by Soekarno: Mustafa Kemal had not obliterated religion from Turkey; *au contraire*, Kemalism had strengthened the believers’ faith. The Fascist regime in Italy, America’s bankers, and all the enemies of Turkey had been spreading false information to undermine the international position of this country, but in truth Aya Sofia mosque had been transformed into a museum out of respect for the Christian community, while hundreds of new mosques had been built across the country to facilitate attendance at sermons, Sunday had become the sole weekly holiday to favour commerce, polygamy had been abolished to improve women’s conditions in the poorer region of Anatolia, the Qur’an and *khutbas* were in Turkish to ensure that Muslims fully understood their religion, and religious schools had been closed to ensure a higher rate of employment.

And, as addressed in the last article of the series, the caliphate and pan-Islamism had been abandoned for the benefit of the Turkish nation and that of Muslims across the world. Mustafa Kemal—it was argued—mostly feared that retaining the caliphate would have meant being responsible for the peace, welfare and stability of all Muslim peoples, while shackling them to Turkey’s political authority: if the former would have surely brought discontent amongst the Turks, the latter would have done so among the subject populations.⁴⁰

In 1940 *Pandji Islam* was to become the forum for the debate between Indonesian secular (pro-Kemalism) and religious (pro-Islamic state) nationalists; until then the only criticism, although veiled, of these reforms had come from Hadji Agoes Salim in his obituary of Kemal: ‘If there’s anything that should be stopped, or inverted, is only some things which Kemal Atatürk has pushed too far to please Europe. But if these things are changed back in accordance to the nature of Turkey and the will of Islam, Turkey will not suffer.’⁴¹

Soekarno was mostly interested in the religious aspect of Kemal’s reforms, and he saw these as an exemplary way for a Muslim nation to come to terms

⁴⁰ Alfian Yoesoef Helmi, ‘Agama Islam di Turkey’, *Pandji Islam*, 20, 5 July 1938, pp. 453–4; 21, 25 July 1938, pp. 473–5; 22, 5 August 1938, pp. 493–4; 23, 15 August 1938, pp. 519–20.

⁴¹ Hadji Agoes Salim, ‘Mustafa Kemal Attaturk’, *Pandji Islam*, 33–4, *nomor lebaran ke-I*, 1938, pp. 715–16. Agoes Salim was a Mecca-trained leader of Sarekat Islam, later Minister of Foreign Affairs for the republic, and a strong advocate of Islamic law and government.

with tradition and modernity. After his transfer from Flores to Sumatra, still in banishment, Soekarno was regularly publishing on this matter. The piece that provoked the strongest reaction was probably 'Me-'muda'-kan pengertian Islam' ('Rejuvenating Islamic understanding'); praising the 'rethinking of Islam' carried forward in Turkey, Iraq, Arabia, Egypt, Syria, Palestine and India, it sparked a debate with Ahmad Hassan, Muhammad Natsir,⁴² and other Islamic scholars, who quickly challenged Soekarno's approach and choice of words. Natsir (under the pseudonym A. Mucholis) wrote 'Me-'mudah'-kan pengertian Islam', with the additional 'h' changing the title to 'Simplifying Islamic understanding', and Hassan (under the pseudonym M.S.) wrote 'Mem-'boedak'-kan pengertian Islam', meaning 'Enslaving Islamic understanding'. This debate ultimately addressed the question of an Islamic state versus a secular state—a debate that would never be really 'over' in Indonesia—and it is of the utmost interest that, more often than not, this was framed in terms of 'Ottoman caliphate versus Kemalist republic' and 'conservatism versus modernity'.

Focusing on the different approaches taken by Palestine, (Saudi) Arabia, Indonesia and Turkey to mediate between religious and secular principles and laws, Soekarno makes the case that as a result of Palestine's conservatism—induced by its multi-religious population—the youth had recently started rebelling and advocating moderate politics; in Egypt the compromise between *shari'a* and secular laws had been reached as a consequence of its geographical position between East and West, which required 'modernization' and 'progress'; in India the key was in its philosophical and spiritual tradition, which contributed to the country's distancing itself from scripturalism; and as far as Arabia was concerned, Soekarno believed that in 1940 the fanaticism of the Wahhabis was fading away, and argued that the youth were showing reformist attitudes.

In explaining the rationale behind Turkey's choice not to follow Egypt's model of merging secular and religious laws, and opting instead for a full separation of the two spheres, Soekarno adds to the already mentioned 'preservation of independence' motive the temperament of the Turks.

⁴² Born in Sumatra in 1908, he received both a secular and religious education. Natsir attended the Dutch schools in Padang. In the late 1920s he moved to Bandung, where he became an important member of Persis; during the Japanese occupation and subsequent decades he was very active in Masyumi, and was a cabinet minister several times.

Defining them as ‘neither fanatics nor philosophers’, and attributing it to the late Islamization of the Turkish population, he insists on the syncretic nature of its culture, which had resulted from the mixture of Byzantine, Iranian, and Arab traditions; not only was the fez a Greek tradition, but Caesaro-papism was rooted in the Greek Orthodox Christian tradition.⁴³ Sukarno had begun to plant the seeds of a parallel with Indonesia, even though he never directly linked the Turkish experience to Indonesia, as Soetomo had done.

Turkey was by far the most interesting case for Sukarno, and returning to his 1936 metaphor of Islam as fire, in this and other articles he points to the way Kemal had treated Islam as a ‘lively fire’ rather than a ‘formal system’. It is from this perspective that a country on the path of modernization ought to separate Islam from the state: ‘Islam has been freed from the care of the state, the caliphate has been abolished, the office of the Commissar for Shari‘a has been abolished ... The Swiss code has been adopted ... and the language and the Qur‘an have been Turkified.’⁴⁴ In another context, however, secularization is translated into democratization, on the basis that in post-Ottoman Turkey an Islamic state would have been a dictatorship imposing Islamic laws on non-Muslims.⁴⁵ Sukarno is very skilful in turning the spotlight on different aspects of the prism of Kemal’s reforms, but above all his portrayal of Kemal’s secularization as allowing religious institutions freedom to thrive in society without state intervention—instead of the state strictly defining the space in which religion could operate—seems to ignore the plain reality of things in favour of Kemal’s propaganda in 1940 Turkey.

As Helmi had already suggested, the ideal of a transnational caliphate had become even more complex as nationalist aspirations were dominating international politics. Sukarno was convinced that in this era of nationalism a unified Islamic state would have been impossible—anachronistic at best. Once the sultanate had been abolished the separation of religion and state was the natural next step, openly rejecting the suggestion of a democratic Islamic republic in which the caliph-president would be chosen by the

⁴³ Soekarno, ‘Apa sebab Turki memisah agama dari Negara?’, *Panji Islam* 1940, in *Dibawah Bendera*, pp. 403–45.

⁴⁴ Soekarno, ‘Me‘muda’-kan pengertian Islam’, *Panji Islam*, 1940, in *Dibawah Bendera*, 369–401.

⁴⁵ Soekarno, ‘Saja Kurang Dinamis’, *Pandji Islam*, 1940, in *Dibawah Bendera*, 447–55.

*umma*⁴⁶—an option which in the following years would gain much support in Indonesia's Islamic circles.

In the 1941 Persis booklet *Islam and Nationalism* Hassan recapitulated the arguments that had appeared on the organization's bulletin for the past decade, relying heavily on the writings of the Azharis Muhammad 'Abduh and Rashid Rida. Calling all Muslims to unite and rally in favour of a religious approach to nationalism, Hassan portrayed Islam as the only foundation for a strong anti-colonial movement and independent state, and he pointed to Turkey's separation of religion and state as the origin of widespread immorality and idolatry. Within this frame, Soekarno's beloved model is equated to the age of pre-Islamic ignorance, the *jahiliyya*. And in dealing with 'the danger of doubter-hypocrites and transgressors who use religion as a weapon and bait to catch Muslims for a principle that is not blessed by Allah and His Messenger', Hassan reminds his reader that 'as for casting out the laws of Islam and replacing them with manmade laws, as in Turkey ... they [the writers in *al-Manār*] absolutely do not permit it!'⁴⁷

Similarly, Natsir had criticized Kemal's attempt to 'return religion to society', telling the Turkish people not to be angry because 'we are not getting rid of our religion, we are only surrendering religion back into the hands of society, freed from the affairs of the state, so that religion can be healthy again'. But how, asked Natsir, could the secular Swiss code make Islam healthy, if it was itself neutral towards religion?

Islam has rules, laws, how do we follow these laws if there isn't a state which implements them? ... how can we have a state which is neutral towards religion? In short, for us Muslims, *negara* is not a self standing goal, rather it is a tool for the afterlife, and this has to comply with the rules of Islam. We don't have to have a caliph, what is important is that the head of state behaves as *ulil amri*, implements the directives of Islam in his ruling of the state, in theory and in practice.⁴⁸

Even though no Muslim leader supported the Ottomans, what many challenged was the reaction of the 'Kemalists'. If Indonesian Kemalists argued that the separation of state and religion was necessary to ensure that

⁴⁶ Soekarno, 'Apa Sebab'.

⁴⁷ Ahmad Hassan, *Islam dan Nasionalisme*, 1941. Translation in Howard M. Feder-spiel, 'Islam and Nationalism', *Indonesia*, 24 (1977), 39–85.

⁴⁸ Natsir's articles were reprinted collectively with a number of speeches in a three-volume opera magna: Muhammad Natsir, 'Arti Agama dalam Negara', in *Capita Selecta I*, Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1954, 436–44.

both religion and the government would gain in 'adroitness, dexterity, and agility' in the aftermath of the Ottoman disaster,⁴⁹ Natsir reaffirmed the value of Islam as a political ideology, contextualizing the failure of political Islam within the Ottoman experience; he suggested that this part of the problem, as well as the large foreign debt, the Greek threat, people's deviated beliefs, ignorance, and hypocrisy—the real root causes of Turkey's decline—could only be healed with a spiritual remedy.⁵⁰ The sultan-caliph had gone astray from the right path, he had a harem, the Turks would turn the beads of the *tasbeih* while drinking alcohol, and ultimately Islam was no longer the actual foundation of the government, but just a brand:

Now, if in Turkey during the Ottomans there was an unjust government, we don't have to say that it is because Islam and state were united; such a government would not be set right by the separation of the two, as Soekarno says, because religion has since long been separated from the state. If we really want to fix this country [Indonesia], then we have to include fundamental rights and duties between rulers and ruled, this is what will ensure progress, and in the state philosophy has to be clear that actions in life are directed towards gaining the afterlife. That is all contained by one system, one culture, one teaching, one ideology, which is called ... Islam.⁵¹

The real solution was in renovating the caliphal institution, and in a true modernist fashion, Hassan asserted that if 'traditionalism' could hold back progress, a 'modern understanding' would encourage it instead, stopping Mustafa Kemal (and possibly any other leader) from becoming a dictator, 'drinking arak, gambling, dancing, committing adultery, talking to women with red lips, and [doing] other immoral things.'⁵² In the same way Natsir had rhetorically asked how the Kemalists could possibly think that Islam, through its commitment to eradicating drunkenness and obscenity and inspiring a more deeply felt and practised morality, could hinder progress.⁵³

As Hassan had already undermined Soekarno's devotion to 'the Goddess of Progress' and his admiration for Kemal (whom Soekarno had at some point labelled as the leader of the 'most important religious movement of Turkey'), and vilified his comparison of Islam's and Christianity's relation to politics, his inability to discern between moulding a state on Islamic laws and following the example of a corrupt Ottoman caliph, and finally his

⁴⁹ Natsir, 'Kemalisten di Indonesia', in *Capita Selecta I*, pp. 478–80.

⁵⁰ Natsir, 'Mengasih Islam Bersinggasana dalam Kalbu', in *Capita Selecta I*, pp. 461–5.

⁵¹ Natsir, 'Arti Agama dalam Negara'.

⁵² M.S., 'Memboedakkan Pengertian Islam VI', *al-Lisaan*, 52 (October 1940), pp. 43–8.

⁵³ Natsir, 'Mungkinkah Quran mengatur Negara?', in *Capita Selecta I*, 447–50.

understanding of the abolition of Arabic script and the call for prayer in Arabic as a way to spread literacy,⁵⁴ Natsir insisted that Soekarno had misunderstood Kemal's actions. Soekarno had maintained that secularization had been pursued with the broader aim of democratizing the government, but Kemal was 'a dictator, a *führer*, a *duce*', who limited freedom of speech and the printing of critical newspapers, and prohibited opposition parties.⁵⁵ Turkey's military victories and initial progress had been achieved well before Kemal separated religion and politics, when the country and people's lives were still entrenched in Islam. It had been only after he had attained political authority and gained the people's faith that he had begun, step by step, to deconstruct Islamic authority: first the sultanate, then the caliphate, Islamic laws, and eventually religion altogether.⁵⁶

Hassan had accepted the fact that some countries, such as India and Malaya, had chosen not to follow Islamic laws, but what appeared to enrage him was Soekarno's insistence that Kemal's reforms were aimed at modernizing religion, or the nation, while all he had achieved was the fragmentation of the *umma* and the detachment of Muslims from a comprehensive implementation of Islam.⁵⁷ And even though a pan-Islamic transnational state was not considered as an immediate goal by any of the writers under consideration here, they were not ready to compromise the unity of *din wa-dawla* just yet. This development would eventually occur, but not until the late 1950s, and with the exception of the Darul Islam–Negara Islam Indonesia movement.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ M.S., 'Memboedakkan Pengertian Islam III', *al-Lisaan*, 49 (July 1940), 3–8; M.S., 'Memboedakkan Pengertian Islam IV', *al-Lisaan*, 49 (July 1940), 31–6.

⁵⁵ Natsir, 'Islam "demokrasi"?', in *Capita Selecta I*, 451–5.

⁵⁶ Natsir, 'Kemal Pasja dan Vrijmetselarij', in *Capita Selecta I*, 466–77.

⁵⁷ M.S., 'Memboedakkan Pengertian Islam IV'.

⁵⁸ The Darul Islam movement was established by Partai Sarekat Islam and Masyumi leader S.M. Kartosuwiryo (1905–62) as a transformation of the West Java branch of the Islamic party in the aftermath of the Renville agreement (January 1948). The movement, which in August 1949 transmuted further into the Islamic State of Indonesia (Negara Islam Indonesia), had a religious, anti-colonial agenda and aimed at the establishment of an Islamic state. After the Dutch withdrawal in December 1949, Kartosuwiryo's movement refused to be absorbed into the Indonesian Republic or the republican army, and it led a rebellion, which was eventually crushed in 1962. For more details on the movement see Cornelis van Dijk, *Rebellion under the Banner of Islam: The Darul Islam in Indonesia*, Leiden: KITLV, 1981, Formichi, 'Pan-Islam and Religious Nationalism'; and Formichi, *Islam and the Making of the Nation*.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This survey of selected secular and Islamic periodicals printed in Indonesia between 1922 and 1941 has shown that Mustafa Kemal's transformation of the Ottoman caliphate into a secular republic had a crucial impact on the shaping of Indonesia's nationalist debate, arguably stronger than the impact on fomenting a revival of Islamic governance, especially as the corruption of the caliphs was increasingly identified as the major cause of the institution's decline and dissolution.

In this new light, I would like to advance two considerations on the character of the Indonesian state and on the Islamic revival in both Turkey and Indonesia. First, Soekarno's misunderstanding of 'Kemalism' as the liberation of religion from the control of the state, and Islam's inevitable—albeit natural—adaptation to the needs of modernity, encapsulated in the motto 'Islam is progress', ultimately fed into his formulation of the Pancasila state philosophy, in which religion (and not Islam in its own right) featured as moral guidance, and not as an element of statecraft. This tendency was further accentuated by General Suharto's New Order regime, from 1965 until his lukewarm rapprochement with Islam in the early 1990s.

Second, these parallel developments in Turkey's and Indonesia's paths towards becoming modern republican states, with their own relation to religion—the former self-professedly secular, the latter non-confessional—and ethnic differences (in both cases downplayed in favour of national territorial unity) can contribute to understanding the revival of Islam in the public sphere witnessed since the 1990s, and more so in the 2000s. Interestingly, Turkey, the state that most sought to control and limit public manifestations of religion, is now confronted with a re-Islamization of politics from state actors; while Indonesia, which has, albeit inconsistently and only for calculated benefit, at various times incorporated elements of religion in its policies, has for the past two decades faced a religious revival from below, and the failure of religious parties.

NOTE ON PERIODICALS

Periodicals were chosen because of their political and ethnic affiliations, focusing on the period 1922–40, and within the limits of the National Library of Indonesia's (PNRI) holdings. I have surveyed *Darmokondo* (a daily newspaper printed by the Javanist, secular Boedi Oetomo organization

in Solo, 1922–40), *Bintang Hindia* (a monthly illustrated magazine aimed at spreading ideas of 'modernization' printed in Weltevreden, Jakarta, 1922–30), *Doenia Islam* (a weekly published by Sarekat Islam in Weltevreden, Jakarta, and edited by Hadji Agoes Salim, 1922–3), *Medan Moeslimin* (a bi-weekly edited by Hadji Misbach, Solo, 1923–6), *Oetoesan Hindia* (a daily edited by Tjokroaminoto in Surabaya, 1923), *Keng Po* (a Chinese-Malay daily newspaper, Jakarta, 1924), *Sinar Hindia* (a daily newspaper of the 'red' Sarekat Islam in Semarang, edited by Semaoen, 1924), *Bendera Islam* (edited by Tjokroaminoto in Surabaya and Yogyakarta, 1924–5), *Bintang Islam* (a bi-monthly magazine on Islam, printed in Solo, 1923–4; 1927–8; 1930), *Kaoem Moeda* (a bi-weekly representative of modernist Muslims in Bandung, 1924), *Penerangan Islam* (1927), *Fadjar Asia* (the Sarekat Islam Party's daily newspaper, printed in Weltevreden, Jakarta 1927–30), *Lasjkar* (Sarekat Islam's monthly magazine, edited by Soekiman and printed in Yogyakarta, 1930), *Pandji Islam* (edited by the reformist Zainal Arifin Ahmad, in Medan, 1936–41), *Pemandangan* (daily newspaper of the secular nationalist movement, printed in Jakarta, 1933–58, consulted 1937), and *al-Lisaan* (Persis periodical, edited by Ahmad Hassan in Bandung, 1940).

THE WAHHABIS AND THE OTTOMAN CALIPHATE

THE MEMORY OF HISTORICAL ANTAGONISM

Madawi Al-Rasheed

Wahhabis are not known to have called for the establishment of an Islamic caliphate. Neither their eighteenth-century classical sources nor contemporary publications endorse a call for this Islamic polity, a term that is solely reserved in their literature for three Islamic historical periods: the four Rightly Guided Caliphs, the Umayyads (661–750), and the ‘Abbasids (750–1258). The founder of the movement, Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab (1703–1792), was mainly concerned with the purity of faith rather than the unity of the Muslim community or its incorporation in a single political entity.¹

In Wahhabi circles the Ottoman caliphate is not recognized as a caliphate, and is usually known in their sources as *al-dawla al-othmaniyya*, or the Ottoman state. The primary concerns of the Wahhabiyya were first to establish *shari’a* law and second to purify Islam from innovations. Neither the caliphate nor the Islamic state is theorized in the writings of Wahhabi *‘ulama*, including the founder of the movement. While there is an elaborate

¹ Basheer Nafi, *The Rise and Decline of the Arab-Islamic Reform Movement*, London: Institute of Contemporary Islamic Thought, 2000, p. 26.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

Wahhabi discourse on Islamic law, creed, worship and ritual, Wahhabis are not known for producing political theology. Their views on the rightful Islamic leadership are a reiteration of classical Sunni opinions.

Wahhabis are better known for their denunciation of the Ottoman caliphate and their rebellion against the authority of the Ottoman sultan, who maintained a nominal suzerainty over the Arabian Peninsula, including the area where Wahhabis emerged in the eighteenth century. While the Ottomans faced many rebellions against their authority among Muslims, the Wahhabis were unique in their opposition, which was based on religious and doctrinal grounds. Moreover, Wahhabi rebellions started in the heartland of the Arabian Peninsula and threatened the Hijaz where the two holy mosques of Mecca and Medina are situated. As the Ottoman sultans maintained suzerainty over the region, they were keen to deal swiftly with Wahhabi threats in order to maintain their control of the holy places and the pilgrimage season. Their religious legitimacy rested on their protection not only of the cities but also of the routes leading towards them.

The legitimacy of the Ottoman caliphate as an Islamic polity is still debated by contemporary Wahhabis in Saudi Arabia. In this chapter I aim to explore how a contemporary jihadi activist, brought up on the teachings of Wahhabiyya, continues to denounce the Ottoman caliphate as a blasphemous state. The jihadi activist Nasir al-Fahd (b. 1969) belongs to the Saudi Wahhabi jihadi trend that has gathered momentum since the late 1990s.² His treatise on the Ottoman caliphate and its un-Islamic nature summarizes the contemporary Wahhabi view on a polity that nominally ruled over the Arabian Peninsula from the sixteenth century.³ Although al-Fahd has deviated from official Wahhabiyya in his jihadi writings and activism—for example, unlike his religious and intellectual Wahhabi predecessors he justifies rebellion against illegitimate rulers—his views on the Ottoman caliphate are in line with mainstream Wahhabi discourse. I draw on his contemporary arguments and discourses to throw light on the Wahhabiyya's uncompromising assessment of the Ottoman caliphate. The chapter explains why al-Fahd revisits the topic of the Ottoman caliphate at a time when his main concern appears to be providing a religious treatise on how to deal with contemporary Muslim leaders who are allied with an infidel

² Madawi Al-Rasheed, *Contesting the Saudi State: Islamic Voices from a New Generation*, Cambridge University Press, 2007.

³ Nasir al-Fahd, 'al-Dawla al-Othmaniyya wa mawqif al-shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab minha', unpublished manuscript, 2001.

power, namely the Americans. Revisiting the Ottoman caliphate is a reflection of the proliferation of Islamist movements in Saudi Arabia where the caliphate is either central or peripheral. In recalling the subject of the Ottoman caliphate, al-Fahd tries to situate himself among those who have no nostalgia for a vanished polity, a polity that is seen as ethnically inferior to Arabs, who are imagined as central in a future project to revive the Islamic polity. Moreover, returning to the Ottoman caliphate is a reflection of contemporary political and regional development in the Middle East where modern-day Turkey under the leadership of an Islamic party is increasingly playing a visible role in mediating conflicts and regional efforts in line with a new political agenda articulated by the political scientist and Foreign Minister Davudoglu.

Al-Fahd is not the only critic of the Ottoman empire. A previous generation of Arab nationalists and activists had already poured ink over the disappearing caliphate.⁴ But today there is a new generation of Saudi writers and ideologues of all political persuasions warning against the neo-Ottoman revival. Saudi religious scholars have expressed their anger against the new Turkish cultural penetration of Arab society in the context of Turkish soap operas that continue to attract large Arab audiences; they warned against the blasphemy of such popular culture coming from an Islamic country such as Turkey. After several decades of Turkish-Arab disengagement under the Kemalist regime, Turkey's influence, its political Islamic model and its economic growth are all grounds for apprehension on the Arab side. An imagined neo-Ottoman expansion continues to haunt Arab regimes including that in Saudi Arabia, which has been struggling to play a leading role not only in the Arab world but also among Muslims worldwide. Al-Fahd's denunciation of the Ottoman empire is only one trend within a larger apprehension that expresses itself in print and visual media in the twenty-first century in the Arab world.

Like many jihadi activists and ideologues al-Fahd is concerned with one important Islamic principle, namely *khurij ala al-hakim*, rebellion against Muslim political authority. Contemporary jihadis are accused of practising *khuruj*, for which the Islamic punishment is death. The act of *khuruj* involves an abhorred rebellion in almost all Sunni classical sources. Sunni

⁴ Joshua Teitelbaum, 'Sharyf Husayn ibn Ali and the Hashemite Vision of the Post-Ottoman Order: From Chieftaincy to Suzerainty', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 34, 1 (1998), 103–22; Joshua Teitelbaum, *The Rise and Fall of the Hashemite Kingdom of Arabia*, London: C. Hurst & Co., 2001.

‘ulama denounced rebellion against legitimate existing political authority and considered it a cause of chaos, dissent, and weakness of Muslims. It is never justified except in very limited circumstances, for example if a ruler exhibits clear and obvious *kufr* (blasphemy). The rejection of *khuruj* is not surprising given the recurrent rebellions that plagued previous Islamic caliphates, including those against the early Muslim caliphs, the Umayyads and the ‘Abbasids. Previous Muslim caliphates coexisted with rebellions on their peripheries that resulted in whole regions escaping the centralized authority of the caliph and the weakening of the Muslim community. Hence rebellions are associated with fragmentation, division, and vulnerability of the Islamic polity. Sunni scholars accepted the Islamic authority of the day, and even justified dynastic rule in order to avoid disintegration of the state and weakening of religion. This was ‘based on their balancing of stability against social and political disintegration and civil war’.⁵ Sunni scholars cherished the caliphate as a system under whose banner the *umma* could be united. As a result, their position on rebellions became established within the Sunni tradition, and has lasted until the present day. Within the post-colonial states of the Muslim world, Sunni scholars have never called for rebellion against autocratic, unjust or debauched Muslim political leaders. From Egypt to Saudi Arabia, scholars came under the control of governments that turned their institutions into state bureaucracies and integrated them as functionaries. Contemporary Sunni scholars continue to revere personalities who wrote important treatises on the danger of rebellion, such as al-Mawardi (d. 1058), Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1327), and Ibn Jama‘a (d. 1334). These figures were icons that are dominant among Sunni Muslim scholars of today.⁶

However, with the rise of the Islamist trend from the 1970s there emerged a cohort of dissident *‘ulama* and Islamist thinkers, the most famous perhaps being Sayyid Qutb, who dubbed both society and the state as a state of *jahiliyya* (ignorance) that needed to be resisted and overthrown.⁷ The jihadi trend in Saudi Arabia was part of the radical Islamist movement that called for rebellion against contemporary rulers.⁸ The history of rebel-

⁵ Nafi, *Rise and Decline*, p. 5.

⁶ Patricia Crone, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought*, Edinburgh University Press, 2004.

⁷ Roxanne Euben, *Enemy in the Mirror: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Limits of Modern Rationalism*, Princeton University Press, 1999.

⁸ Thomas Hegghammer, *Jihad in Saudi Arabia: Violence and Pan-Islamism since 1979*, Cambridge University Press, 2010.

THE WAHHABIS AND THE OTTOMAN CALIPHATE

lions against previous rulers came to dominate the thinking of many jihadi ideologues in order to justify current radicalism. The jihadi trend overlooked established treatises and endeavoured to provide an alternative theology that justified their violence against both the state and society in Muslim countries, including Saudi Arabia. Historical examples of rebellion are revisited by defenders of *jihad* in order to provide justification for actions taken by religious scholars and activists who have called for the overthrow of current regimes. A new treatise on the Ottoman caliphate written in the twenty-first century is part of the ideological battle between supporters of the state and jihadis that raged after 9/11. Saudi jihadis revisited the Wahhabi position on the last Ottoman caliphate in order to achieve a number of objectives.

THE WAHHABIS AND THE OTTOMAN CALIPHATE

From its emergence in the eighteenth century the reformist Central Arabian religious movement known to outsiders as the Wahhabiyya developed an antagonistic religious discourse that denounced the Ottoman caliphate and threatened its authority in places as far off as the Hijaz, Iraq, and Syria. In the letters of the founder of the movement, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, and his followers among the *'ulama* we find a plethora of references to the blasphemy of the people who fell under Ottoman authority and the need to purify their faith and practices so that they return to true Islam. Those who did not willingly succumb to Wahhabi preaching pressure and voluntarily reform their religion were fought under the banner of a *jihad* launched against blasphemous Muslims. From Central Arabia a Sa'udi-Wahhabi alliance was formed in the middle of the eighteenth century to spread true Islam by resorting to both peaceful preaching and the sword. The Wahhabis expanded their power, and by the beginning of the nineteenth century they had already threatened Ottoman rule in the Hijaz and disrupted pilgrimage routes.⁹ The Ottomans saw in the Wahhabiyya a destabilizing rebellion that threatened its interests in Arabia and beyond.

The Wahhabiyya was consequently suppressed and its centre, Deriyya, destroyed in 1818 on the orders of the Ottoman Sultan. The Ottomans delegated the task of eliminating the Wahhabiyya to Muhammad 'Ali of Egypt, who sent his sons Tusun Pasha and Ibrahim Pasha to Arabia. Ibra-

⁹ R. Winder, *Saudi Arabia in the Nineteenth Century*, London: Macmillan, 1965.

him Pasha arrived in the Hijaz and moved to Central Arabia to crush the Wahhabi rebellion in its capital, Deriyya. The Wahhabi leader, Abdullah Ibn Sa'ud, was defeated and transported first to Cairo then to Istanbul, where together with several Wahhabi imams he was beheaded for the sin of rebelling against the authority of the Ottoman sultan. The Wahhabiyya had challenged Ottoman rule in the most vital region of the empire, the Hijaz, undermining the religious legitimacy of the Ottoman caliphate. The Wahhabis' raids and occupation of the Hijaz, their disruption of the pilgrimage and trade routes to Mecca, and their plundering in Iraq and Syria prompted the Ottomans to respond. While the Ottoman-Egyptian invasion of Arabia was successful in ending Wahhabi raids and expansion, it failed to suppress the Wahhabi movement or eradicate its teachings. The first Wahhabi polity disappeared under Ottoman-Egyptian pressure, but the Wahhabi religious world-view remained dormant among the population of Central Arabia.

Throughout the nineteenth century a weakened Wahhabiyya continued to exist in Arabia, but it avoided direct confrontation with the Ottoman empire as it was too weak to stage a new rebellion. Its new Sa'udi-Wahhabi leadership pledged allegiance to the Ottoman sultan. Wahhabi scholars preached a return to true Islam without being able to use force or launch *jihad* against those who did not endorse their message. The Sa'udi-Wahhabi polity of the nineteenth century remained a local political entity unable to expand beyond its new capital, Riyadh.¹⁰ It was plagued by internal power struggles between various Al Sa'ud contenders, some of whom sought refuge and help from the Ottomans in Hasa and Iraq against their rivals within the family. This was controversial, as most Wahhabi scholars regarded the Ottomans as an infidel power, thus making any request for political support from them an illegitimate political move. The Wahhabis remained confined to Central Arabia, preaching their own theology, while awaiting the right historical moment for a revival of their mission.

The movement re-consolidated itself in Arabia early in the twentieth century under the leadership of the founder of Saudi Arabia, 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Sa'ud, but initially it did not actively challenge Ottoman rule.¹¹ Allied with the British in 1915, the Sa'udi leadership continued to openly pledge allegiance to the Ottoman empire while secretly negotiating with its opponents. Unlike the Hashemites in the Hijaz,¹² the Sa'udi leadership preferred

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ A. Vassiliev, *The History of Saudi Arabia*, London: al-Saqi, 1998.

¹² Teitelbaum, *Rise and Fall*.

to refrain from direct military engagement with Ottoman troops in Arabia. When the opportunity presented itself during the First World War, the Sa'udis adopted a policy of wait and see. They did not participate in any of the anti-Ottoman war efforts that were orchestrated by the British and carried out by Sharif Husayn of Mecca. The Wahhabi leadership remained cautious. Their troops did not engage the Ottomans in any military encounters with a view of expelling them from Arabia. They did, however, attack local chiefs who had been allies of the Ottomans, thus undermining the Ottoman caliphate in the interior of Arabia.¹³ The expulsion of the Ottomans from the most important region of the Hijaz was left to the Sharif of Mecca, together with loyal Arabian tribes, under the leadership of the famous Lawrence of Arabia (T.E. Lawrence).¹⁴ Sau'di-Wahhabi forces adopted neutrality and awaited the demise of those who had been their arch-enemies since the eighteenth century—the Ottoman empire and its client in Arabia, Sharif Husayn, who had rebelled against his own Ottoman patrons. Once the empire collapsed with the end of the First World War, and Ottoman troops fled Arabia, the Sa'udis marched on the Hijaz and occupied it in 1925, thus ending the Sharif's dream of establishing an Arab Islamic caliphate to replace the Ottomans, and bringing the Wahhabiyya to this important region once again.

Nothing in the Wahhabis' writings of the early twentieth century indicates that they aspired to establish a caliphate to fill the power vacuum left by the demise of the Ottoman empire. When their forces occupied Mecca in 1924 they did not declare it the centre of a new Islamic caliphate. Their political centre remained in Riyadh, as they had no intention of moving to the Hijaz, where they had very few supporters among its cosmopolitan inhabitants. While some Hijazi scholars adopted the Wahhabi mission and sympathized with its teachings, for example Shaykh Abdullah Nasif, the majority of the *'ulama* in this region were antagonistic to the Wahhabi Hanbali tradition. In fact, since the eighteenth century several Hijazi *'ulama* had written treatises denouncing the Wahhabiyya, the most famous of whom was Ahmad Dahlan, the Shafi'i mufti of Mecca.¹⁵

¹³ Madawi Al-Rasheed, *Politics in an Arabian Oasis: The Rashidis of Saudi Arabia*, London: I.B. Tauris, 1991.

¹⁴ Joseph Kostiner, *The Making of Saudi Arabia 1916–1936*, Oxford University Press, 1993.

¹⁵ Ahmad Dahlan, *al-Durar al-sanoyya fi al-radd ala al-wahhabiyya*, Beirut: al-Maktaba al-Thanqafiyya, n.d.

For Wahhabis the Hijaz region remained vital as a pilgrimage centre. Their occupation of the region allowed them to claim protection of the Two Holy Mosques in Mecca and Medina, thus endowing their realm with important religious symbolism, in addition to accruing a substantial income from the pilgrimage season. The Saudi state that emerged in 1932 declared Riyadh as its capital, but retained the Hijaz as a place where foreign relations and contacts with the outside world were conducted.¹⁶ The occupation of the Hijaz, the seat of the Two Holy Mosques, was an important Wahhabi conquest that gave them control of a region vital for all Muslims. The Saudi leadership immediately reassured Muslims that the pilgrimage season would not be affected and access to the holy places would remain open to all Muslims. Wahhabi troops were tasked with controlling the Hijaz in order to purify Islam from innovations, in addition to generating an important source of income from the pilgrimage season and the trade that passed through Jeddah.

After the conquest of the Hijaz, Wahhabi troops continued to raid other territories to spread true Islam, but they were constrained by the British, who had already occupied vital regions to the north of Saudi Arabia. By 1932, when the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was declared, Wahhabis had had to moderate their ambitions and accept the status quo, that is, a state within the boundaries that Britain allowed at the time. Their kingdom had no obvious claims to lead all Arabs or to establish a caliphate among Muslims. The Wahhabis' narrow religious base of the Saudi kingdom and its limited appeal among Arabs prevented any possibility of even entertaining this eventuality. Equally important was the political context of the new colonial designs for the region, especially the British and French partition of the former territories of the Ottoman empire in the Middle East; they would have resisted any political configuration that would undermine their share of what had been Ottoman territory. This was reflected in the demise of Sharif Husayn's dream of leading all the Arabs and creating an Arab Islamic caliphate as an alternative to the Ottoman caliphate. Sharif Husayn's plan clashed with the new colonial context of the Arab region (Teitelbaum 2001). Ibn Sa'ud, the founder of the contemporary Saudi state, feared that any claims to lead all the Arabs would eventually bring about his own demise. He accepted British designs and halted the advance of his Wahhabi

¹⁶ Madawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, 2nd edn, Cambridge University Press, 2010.

THE WAHHABIS AND THE OTTOMAN CALIPHATE

troops, who by 1927 were still engaged in raids with the objective of spreading true Islam.¹⁷

With a few exceptions most Wahhabi scholars considered their emerging kingdom a legitimate Islamic state, as it promised to apply *shari'a* and purify the faith from heterodox religious practices such as those that had flourished under Ottoman rule. It was only within these boundaries that their campaign against heterodox Islamic practices could take place without provoking a military response from the British in the Gulf, Iraq, and Transjordan. Their preaching centred on the territories that became Saudi Arabia. Although they aspired to spread their message beyond these boundaries, they realized that doing so could threaten their newly created state.

However, Wahhabi teachings have continued to denounce the Ottoman caliphate until the present day. Most Saudis enrolled in education encounter the Ottoman caliphate in history textbooks in the context of tracing the rise of the Wahhabi movement and its various attempts to establish a state in Arabia. The demise of the Wahhabiyya in the nineteenth century at the hands of the Ottomans is fully discussed with a view to highlighting the blasphemy of this political entity. Anti-Ottoman Wahhabi discourse centres on the corruption of religious beliefs and practices that flourished under Ottoman rule, namely the Sufi tradition, intercession, and tomb visiting. In classical Wahhabi writings and pamphlets the Ottoman caliphate represents an aberration of religion and a system of *kufir* (blasphemy). The anti-Ottoman caliphate discourse of the early Wahhabis survives for reasons that will become clear later in this chapter. In the following section I highlight the main themes in the writings of the jihadi Nasir al-Fahd, whose treatise on the religious corruption of the Ottoman caliphate circulated on jihadi websites after 9/11.

WAHHABI DENUNCIATION OF THE OTTOMAN CALIPHATE

Nasir al-Fahd is a young jihadi religious scholar who is currently in a Saudi prison. He became known in the 1990s when he began to be associated with religious activism and *fatwas*, all interpreted as inspiring young Saudi militants to practise *takfir* (the excommunication of Islamic political authority) and denounce American hegemony in the Muslim world, espe-

¹⁷ Joseph Kostiner, 'On Instruments and the Designers: The Ikhwan of Najd and the Emergence of the Saudi State', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 21 (1985), 298–323.

cially in Afghanistan and Iraq. His main concern was to clarify the *shari'a* position on Muslim leaders who lend support to Americans in their occupation of Muslim land. He considers such support unlawful and requiring immediate action. Thus rebellion against Muslim rulers becomes legitimate strategy when leaders lose their religious and political authority by forming an alliance with the American infidels. Rebellion, dubbed *khurij ala al-hakim*, ceases to be an act of dissent and *jihad* can be automatically launched without permission from *wali al-amr* (the ruler). *Jihad* becomes an individual duty incumbent on Muslims in the presence of a ruler who is allied with Americans and thereby has no legitimate Islamic authority.¹⁸

While al-Fahd's main preoccupation was with contemporary *jihad*, it is surprising that he wrote a short treatise on the Ottoman caliphate, in which he reminds his audiences of previous Wahhabi positions and adds his own evaluation of the defunct Ottoman polity. It seems that al-Fahd wanted to justify contemporary *jihad* involving rebelling against current Muslim rulers by invoking the legitimacy of the eighteenth-century Wahhabi rebellion against the Ottoman caliphate. This rebellion offers a historical precedent to be emulated in the present context. The eighteenth-century rebellion, according to al-Fahd, took place because the Ottoman caliphate was illegitimate, and hence the conclusion to be drawn centres on the legitimacy of contemporary *jihad* against rulers whose actions—for example, alliance with infidels—have rendered them un-Islamic.

After 9/11 al-Fahd circulated one pamphlet on the internet entitled 'The position of Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab on the Ottoman state',¹⁹ in which he summarizes opinions of previous Wahhabi scholars and volunteers his own. This pamphlet is a diversion from his immediate concerns, but to understand why he thought the diversion worthwhile and dedicated time to produce the pamphlet, we must consider the contemporary context in which the Wahhabi tradition was criticized not only in Saudi Arabia but worldwide for its radicalism. Opponents of the Wahhabiyya accuse it of being a Kharijite sect that follows the philosophy of the early medieval Kharijites who rebelled against 'Ali, the fourth caliph in the seventh century. They often cite the example of rebelling against the Ottoman sultan in the eighteenth century to substantiate the claim that this religious tradition had always been radical and violent, in addition to

¹⁸ Al-Rasheed, *Contesting the Saudi State*.

¹⁹ al-Fahd, 'al-Dawla al-Othmaniyya'.

engaging in rebellion against legitimate religio-political authority. Consequently, many opponents of the Wahhabiyya conclude that contemporary Saudi jihadis are nothing but a continuation of early radicalism. The fact that early Wahhabis undermined Ottoman rule in Arabia and threatened the integrity and security of the empire is seen as a sign of chaos and dissent practised against the legitimate Ottoman Islamic caliphate. Sufi Muslims tend to subscribe to this discourse as Wahhabis have clear views that condemn Sufism. Furthermore, while they do not lament the fall of the Sunni Ottoman caliphate, contemporary Shi'ites also accuse Wahhabis of being a modern version of the early Kharijites.

Other opponents of the Wahhabis—for example, advocates of Hizb al-Tahrir,²⁰ whose political activism centres on the re-establishment of the Islamic caliphate—accuse the Wahhabis of contributing to the abolition of the Ottoman caliphate as a result of their early eighteenth-century rebellion. Hizb al-Tahrir advocates refer to Wahhabis as destroyers of the caliphate. Among contemporary Islamists, Hizb al-Tahrir considers itself to be the only group actively engaged in working for the return of the caliphate using peaceful means, al-Qaeda being the other radical Islamist group.

Other contemporary Islamists, for example the Muslim Brotherhood, revere the caliphate project as indicated in the writings of their Egyptian founder Hasan al-Banna, who formed his party in 1928, four years after the abolition of the Ottoman caliphate. But his followers today do not openly mobilize their supporters around this objective. Calls for the application of *shari'a* and the slogan 'Islam is the solution' have featured more prominently in their contemporary activism than the establishment of an overarching Islamic caliphate. Most Muslim Brotherhood activists have unwillingly accepted the nation-state as the framework for their activism while engaging in transnational connections among Muslims worldwide. The original organization of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, and its sister branches in other Arab countries, have participated in national elections and accepted the idea of working towards gaining power in each country, thus making Hasan al-Banna's original project a remote dream from the past. Today no Muslim Brotherhood activist openly calls for the return of the caliphate. The project may have remained as a goal and is perhaps debated secretly in the Brothers' closed meetings. In their discourse

²⁰ Suha Taji-Farouki, *A Fundamental Quest: Hizb al-Tahrir and the Search for the Islamic Caliphate*, London: Grey Seal, 1996.

it seems that power within the nation-state is the goal, but this state is never referred to as a caliphate and its establishment is not an urgent matter at the moment, given the fragmentation of the *umma* and the persistence of the post-colonial nation-states of the Muslim world.

Al-Fahd's treatise on the Ottoman caliphate addresses the enthusiasm for it expressed by Islamist thinkers of the last three decades, especially in Egypt. Many of these Islamists consider the Ottoman caliphate the last bastion of Islam and its fall a calamity that befell on Muslims. He refers to those Islamists as the 'so-called thinkers', *mufakirun Islamiyyun*, thus undermining their status as authorities on Islamic matters.

In the context of the fragmentation of the Islamist field and the competition between various trends within it, it became necessary for al-Fahd to remind his audiences of the Wahhabi position on the Ottoman caliphate. The pamphlet can be seen as an attempt to restore the authenticity of the Wahhabiyya and the blasphemy of the Ottoman caliphate and those contemporary activists who call for its revival. The underlying message of al-Fahd's treatise is to absolve the historical Wahhabiyya from any wrongdoing, mainly the sin of *khuruj* (rebellion), and dismiss the allegation that contemporary jihadis are Kharijites following the footsteps of early rebels against the Ottoman empire. Therefore, reminding his audience of the blasphemy of the Ottoman caliphate and the legitimacy of rebelling against it becomes vital in a struggle between different Islamist trends in the Arab world and in the defence of the Wahhabiyya against its current opponents. Al-Fahd's return to the un-Islamic nature of the Ottoman caliphate that had preoccupied a previous generation of Wahhabi scholars is a contemporary attempt to defend the Wahhabiyya, at a time when the movement is facing mounting pressure and criticism world-wide. More important is the competition that the Wahhabiyya face from other contemporary Islamist trends such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Hizb al-Tahrir. The discourses of many Islamist groups are not simply concerned with their alleged confrontation with the West; in fact, substantial concerns expressed in ideologies, discourses, and publications are much more occupied with defeating Islamist competitors. While Wahhabi jihadis denounce the West, most of their battles are in fact fought with other Muslims such as Sufis, Zaydis, and Shi'a, and new contemporary politicized Muslim groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and its branches in other Muslim countries.

Al-Fahd's argument centres on proving that the Ottoman state was not a caliphate. The title of his pamphlet invokes the term *al-dawla al-othmaniyya* (Ottoman state). Later on al-Fahd uses *al-dawla al-turkiyya* (the Turkish state) in order to anchor the polity in a nationalistic framework, thus limiting its authenticity among Muslims—at least the Arabs among them. His main objection to the Ottoman/Turkish polity is its deliberate attempt to corrupt the creed of Muslims, thus turning them into *mushrik*, associationists who do not strictly adhere to the principle of *tawhid* (monotheism). In his assessment of the 'nature' of this state, two important objections are raised: first, the state spread blasphemy; second, it fought monotheism.

The main manifestation of blasphemy is the spread of Sufism in the territories of the Ottoman caliphate. Citing those who lament the fall of the Ottoman caliphate, for example the contemporary Egyptian thinker 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Shinawi, al-Fahd lists sources that confirm the spread of Sufism among Muslims. While Sufism was present in early Islamic caliphates, it was the Ottoman caliphate that made it the 'religion of the people', according to al-Fahd. In his view the Sufi traditions that flourished among Muslims under the rule of the Ottomans were closer to Shi'ism than to the Sunni tradition. Both Sufism and Shi'ism are denounced by Wahhabis. Al-Fahd argues that without Ottoman encouragement and financial support Sufism would not have penetrated Muslim societies as far as Albania, Central Asia, and the Arab world.

According to al-Fahd, Ottoman sultans competed among themselves to build *takiyyas*, Sufi lodges and mausoleums on the tombs of their Sufi shaykhs. He lists several sultans who patronised Sufi orders, mainly the Bektashiyya and Shadhiliyya, and composed poetry and prose applauding Sufi shaykhs. In his view the main pillars of Islam, such as prayer and *zakat*, became secondary in importance to following the orders of Sufi shaykhs who collected donations from Muslims in return for intercession and other services. Sultan Abdülhamid II is singled out as a radical Sufi, a follower of the Shadhili order. According to al-Fahd he was known to have written to the shaykh of this order addressing him as the giver of life and soul, *mufidh al-ruh wa al-hayat*, an expression that should be reserved for God. Hence Ottoman sultans are proved to have been un-Islamic. In fact al-Fahd goes as far as calling them *kafirs* and pagans.

If the spread of Sufism is one reason to denounce the Ottoman caliphate, its war against monotheism is another serious alleged fault that brands it

un-Islamic. Al-Fahd gives one example close to home: the war launched by the Ottoman Sultan against the Wahhabis in Central Arabia that ended the first Sa'udi-Wahhabi state in 1818. In his historical recollection of the destruction of Deriyya, the first capital of the Wahhabis, al-Fahd reminds his audience of the atrocities committed against Wahhabi *muwahhidun* (monotheists). In this destruction, al-Fahd argues, the Ottomans sought the help of the Christian infidels, more particularly Napoleon. In their exchanges they discussed the Wahhabi movement and what should be done to eliminate it. According to al-Fahd correspondence between the Ottoman Sultan and Napoleon indicates that the former resorted to help from infidels against true Muslims, an act that is not permissible and cannot be justified. Al-Fahd lists violent acts committed by Ottoman soldiers against Wahhabis whose ears were cut and sent to Istanbul. Soldiers were given special rewards for killing Wahhabis. Women and children were taken as *sabaya*, women war booty, then sold as slaves. When Wahhabi *imams* were captured in 1818, they were carried to Istanbul where their heads were cut off and thrown in the sea. Special prayers were held at the time to thank God. This, says al-Fahd, is not a caliphate, it is *dawlat al-kufr al-turkiyya*, a blasphemous Turkish state. Wahhabis, therefore, did not rebel against an Islamic authority because the Ottoman caliphate was *dar al-harb*, the land of war, where the rebellion of the Wahhabis was justified. If the caliphate committed atrocities, sought help from infidels, and spread blasphemy, then fighting it was not simply justified but required from the true believer, according to al-Fahd.

Opinions of previous Wahhabi scholars are used to support al-Fahd's position on the Ottoman caliphate in the second part of his pamphlet. He starts with the first Saudi *imam*, Sa'ud ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz, who supported the founder of Wahhabiyya, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab. Sa'ud received a letter from the Ottoman *wali* of Baghdad reprimanding him for excommunicating Muslims and creating chaos among them. Sa'ud replied to the *wali* by absolving himself and his followers of any sin as Wahhabis were simply 'fighting those who commit *shirk*, for example those who perform associationist practices, pray to others than God, make vows to them, call upon them for help, and visit tombs'. He invited the representative of the Ottoman empire to demonstrate the caliphate's commitment to true Islam by destroying buildings on the tombs of so-called holy men, and announcing their *tawba* (repentance). 'But if Ottomans stay as they are, encouraging and practising blasphemy, we shall continue to fight them until God gives us victory.'

Early Wahhabi sources invoke the ethnic origin of the caliphate in an attempt to highlight its limitations as a legitimate Islamic government. *Al-turk* (Turks) is commonly used in a derogatory manner when referring to both the state and its soldiers, who are also called the soldiers of tombs and blasphemy. One famous Wahhabi scholar mentioned in al-Fahd's pamphlet, Shaykh 'Abd al-Latif ibn Hasan, commented on one Saudi *amir* by the name of Abdullah, who sought the help of the Ottomans against his brother, Sa'ud, in the late nineteenth century. The shaykh wrote that it became clear to him that Abdullah sought *munasara*, help from the Turkish *kafir* state against Muslims. He claims to have advised Abdullah orally that such a move is against the principles of Islam. Consequently, Abdullah showed regret and repentance, and asked for God's forgiveness. He later wrote to the *wali* of Baghdad informing him that he no longer needed help from the Turks, as the support of the people of Najd and its tribes would be sufficient. Shaykh Ibn Hasan warns in his letters of the atrocities of Turkish soldiers who destroyed the land and facilitated the appearance of *shirk*. Al-Fahd's recollection of the early sources is meant to anchor his narrative in the authentic tradition of the early Wahhabi *'ulama*.

The emphasis on the Turkish identity of the Ottoman caliphate in Wahhabi sources reflects a concern with a state in which Arabs had no supremacy or leadership. The Wahhabis' rebellion against the caliphate and their ongoing dislike for it points to a clash between two national identities as early as the eighteenth century. Wahhabis resented the caliphate for religious reasons, but it is accurate to say that they also objected to it on nationalist grounds. The fact that the caliphate claimed sovereignty over the holy places and the eastern parts of Saudi Arabia was objectionable. Despite their concern with spreading a universal, pure Islam beyond nationality or ethnicity, the Wahhabis demonstrated in their sources and poetry, both cited in al-Fahd's pamphlet, a great contempt for the Turkish identity of the Ottoman caliphate. While all their raids and wars were fought under the banner of spreading true Islam, it is conceivable that one of the objectives of these wars was to replace Turkish/Ottoman hegemony with that of the Arabs. The Wahhabis saw Ottoman authority in their territory as both alien and un-Islamic, and so their wars against it summoned up images of the caliphate as debauched foreign rule, immersed in unacceptable religious practices. In the words of Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman al-Shaykh, the caliphate 'was not only pagan but also Turkish'.

CHALLENGING WAHHABI VIEWS ON THE OTTOMAN CALIPHATE

The re-emergence of the Wahhabi anti-Ottoman caliphate discourse can be seen as an attempt to respond to contemporary glorification of the Ottoman polity by some Islamists. It is worth remembering that most Islamist movements emerged after the abolition of the Ottoman caliphate in 1924. This applies to both the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood (founded in 1928) and Hizb al-Tahrir (founded in 1952). The prominent discourse among many Islamists and religious scholars in the Arab world, with the exception of the Wahhabi movement, was in favour of the Ottoman caliphate. While many *'ulama* had reservations about the vanished caliphate, many hoped that the Arabs would seize the opportunity to establish a new Caliphate. This did not materialize, but the dream survived in the minds of many scholars and writers.

While many Saudis share al-Fahd's views, there is a small minority of Hizb al-Tahrir supporters who challenge the Wahhabi consensus on the blasphemy of the Ottoman caliphate. Muhammad al-Masari is a Saudi dissident Islamist who has lived in exile in London since 1994. He is known to support calls for the return of the Islamic caliphate, a system of government that encompasses all Muslims regardless of their nationality or ethnicity. In a long book on the illegitimacy of the Saudi state published in 1995²¹ he demonstrates the errors of the first Sa'udi-Wahhabi polity as it challenged the Ottoman caliphate. He asserts that the Ottoman caliphate was *dar al-Islam* and was a legitimate Islamic polity.²² If the Wahhabis considered the area where they emerged as immersed in blasphemous religious practices they should have purified the faith of people peacefully and returned the area to the legitimate Ottoman caliphate. But in fact they did not do so. On the contrary, they challenged the authority of the legitimate Ottoman sultan, whose realm included the Wahhabi territory. The Wahhabis wanted to create an alternative polity, and this is strictly prohibited as Muslims should not have multiple leaders and states.²³ He responds to those scholars who defend the first Wahhabi state, for example 'Abd al-Rahman 'Abd al-Khaliq, who considers the wars of the Wahhabis against the Ottomans as a form of self-defence. Al-Masari argues that this was not the case, as the first Sa'udi-

²¹ Muhammad al-Masari, *al-Adilla al-shariyya ala adam shariyyat al-dawla al-saudiyya*, London: Dar al-Shariyya, 1995.

²² Ibid., p. 235.

²³ Ibid.

Wahhabi state was illegitimate from the Islamic point of view and had no right to defend itself. Early Islamic scholars, according to al-Masari, considered the first Sa'udi-Wahhabi state a state of Kharijites. He goes as far as to say that the Wahhabi movement was in contact with the British authorities in the Gulf, whose interest was to weaken the Ottoman empire and stage a rebellion against it in its far-flung territories. So if the Ottomans corresponded with the French, as claimed by al-Fahd, the Wahhabis were in contact with the British, equally an infidel power. He concludes by asserting that the Sa'udi-Wahhabi polity emerged as a result of an act of *khuruj*, rebellion against the legitimate authority of the Ottomans, thus causing dissent among Muslims and weakening their only overarching Islamic caliphate.

When al-Masari wrote his book in the mid-1990s he was careful not to antagonize potential supporters in Saudi Arabia, especially those who still revered the eighteenth-century Sa'udi-Wahhabi polity. Therefore his text navigates a careful line between demonstrating the errors of the Wahhabi movement and an outright condemnation of the Saudi polity. In recent years, and in the context of interviews with the author, he articulated severe criticism of the Wahhabiyya, calling it a parochial, regional, racist movement. Despite its claim to appeal to all Muslims, the movement, according to al-Masari, reflects the racism of the people of Najd, who claim that they are superior to all other Muslims by virtue of their descent. This racism explains the emphasis that al-Fahd and other Wahhabis placed on the Turkish origin of the Ottoman caliphate as grounds for discrediting its claims to represent all Muslims. In addition, Wahhabis accepted a practical separation between religion and politics when they offered their allegiance to the Al-Sa'ud, who were given the right to deal with politics, whereas the *ulama* were tasked with providing religious solutions for moral and social issues. The Wahhabis supported hereditary rule and kingship although there is nothing in Islamic sources that makes this a legitimate form of government.

CONCLUSION

Saudi jihadis are accused of engaging in a treacherous rebellion that has since 9/11 resulted in deadly attacks. Al-Fahd is aware of these accusations, especially those that refer to previous acts by Wahhabis against the Ottoman caliphate in order to invoke historical precedents and continuity with the past. His recent treatise on the Ottoman caliphate aims to achieve several objectives. The first is denouncing the Ottoman caliphate to justify the

historical Wahhabiyya's rebellion against it: only if the Ottoman caliphate was a *kafir* state can rebelling against it be justified. The second is justifying contemporary *jihad* against un-Islamic states by invoking the Wahhabi historical precedent of silencing those who criticize contemporary *jihad*. The third is claiming victory for the Wahhabiyya over other competing Islamist movements, especially followers of Hizb al-Tahrir, in whose discourse the caliphate occupies a special mobilizing place. Al-Fahd aspires to defeat the discourses of alternative and competing contemporary Islamists who lament the fall of the Ottoman caliphate and continue to hold the Wahhabis responsible for weakening it as early as the eighteenth century.

The abolition of the Ottoman caliphate divided the Arab and Muslim worlds between those who expressed joy and those who expressed sorrow. Regardless of where Muslims stood on this divide, there is no doubt that many aspired to the creation of an alternative caliphate. These aspirations evaporated under the pressure of colonial rule, which imposed the model of the nation-state on the territories of the Ottoman empire. It is surprising that many contemporary Islamists forget the dark side of previous caliphates, including that of the Ottomans, when they engage in a historical fantasy about unity and strength. The failure of the current Muslim nation-states in delivering an equitable constitutional framework for government is perhaps behind the nostalgia about previous caliphates, which became symbols for strength and unity of the *umma*. Against the strong symbolism of the concept of the caliphate, al-Fahd tries to puncture the inflated glorious image of the Ottoman caliphate. For him, the only rightful caliphate would be one in which Wahhabi teachings are prominent.

THE CALIPHATE AS NOSTALGIA

THE CASE OF THE IRAQI MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD

Fareed Sabri

The term 'Islamic caliphate' often stirs fears of an Islamic empire through which Muslims will strive to acquire political control over both Muslim and non-Muslim nations. It is often perceived by the West and the Westernized Arab elite as a unification of religion and politics. Fears of religious wars justified by religious differences are legitimate if the caliphate (the term denoting a political system under which Muslims were governed until 1924) is seen as like the papacy in Europe in the Middle Ages. The European wars of religion and the Crusades are frequently cited historical examples. There is no denying the fact that the modern political movement in the Islamic world which takes Islam as its point of reference advocates the unity of the political and religion. Its argument is based on the rationality of Islam as a religion compared with the Christianity of the Middle Ages.¹ However, in practice the Islamists in general have showed a remarkable degree of ideological pragmatism and adaptability in their political struggle

¹ Yusif al-Qaradawi, *Bayyinat al-hal al-islami wa shububat al-'almaniyyen wa'l-mutagharibyn* [Evidence of the Islamic solution and the misconceptions of the seculars and the Westernized], Beirut: al-Risala Foundation, 1993, p. 16.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

with the secular regimes in the Middle East, as we will discuss further on, citing the Iraqi Muslim Brotherhood as an example.

In this chapter I will shed light on the Iraqi Muslim Brotherhood's ideology of governance and its evolution in the past sixty years. The history of the Muslim Brotherhood in Iraq and its political ideology is closely linked to the mother organization in Egypt. While Egypt witnessed the emergence of political Islam as early as 1928, Iraq was merely a passive recipient of Islamism. There is little evidence of any politically ideologized Islamic undercurrent or structured thought emerging to challenge secular political parties after the creation of modern Iraq after the First World War and before the advent of the Egyptian influence. Before touching the subject of Egyptian influence we need to shed some light on the history and evolution of the caliphate governance system.

THE MODERN IRAQI STATE UNDER THE BRITISH MANDATE (1920–1932)

The surrender of the Ottomans in 1918 heralded the collapse of the 1,300-year Islamic empire. Religion and loyalty to the *khilafa* in Istanbul was no longer the basis upon which society and its politics were defined, and the age of the nation-state had arrived with the British occupation of Basra, Baghdad and Mosul, the three provinces to the south-east of modern Turkey.² The new political order resulted in the three *wilayat* (provinces) being combined into a single entity called Iraq.

However, the occupation of Iraq did not come without its fair share of woes. The demands for independence culminated in a violent uprising against the British army in 1920. In response the British pegged their hopes on Faysal ibn al-Husayn al-Hashimi, the son of Sharif Husayn, who was shipped in to preside over the new Arab nation. To gain the support and acceptance of his sovereignty from the Shi'a population, King Faysal successfully touted his noble genealogy as a direct descendant of the Prophet.

Faysal was crowned king of Iraq on 23 August 1921. He relied heavily on the Sunni officers (300 in total) who had helped his father in the Hijaz against the Ottomans to administer the affairs of the state. Rather than being a sectarian ploy, this was born of necessity due to the shortage of well-educated Shi'a at the time (Shi'i clergy prohibited their followers from

² Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 32.

joining the Ottoman administration or the army; in fact, many people took Iranian citizenship to avoid serving in the army). Soon the sectarian and ethnically diverse Iraqi society produced a number of nationalists, as well as ideological parties and associations. The majority were targeted towards creating a unified national response to the British Mandate, while a few were created to serve the interests of big landowners and those close to the monarchy. Two political parties, al-Nahda (the awakening) and al-Watani (the national party), were the first to enter the political arena in 1922. However, political Islam in its organized form was not part of the Iraqi political scene until the arrival of a young Iraqi religious scholar who had been studying in Egypt.

Having spent some time in Egypt, Shaykh Muhammad Mahmud al-Sawaf returned to Iraq in 1947 eager to prove to Hasan al-Banna that Iraq was fertile ground for an Islamic missionary movement (*da'wa*), as he had promised a year earlier in a general meeting with the Muslim Brotherhood in Cairo. On his arrival in Iraq Shaykh al-Sawaf founded family cells known as *usras*, consisting mainly of college students. It was the beginning of the Muslim Brotherhood organization in Iraq. It is important to note that al-Sawaf and other leaders of the Iraqi branch of the Muslim Brotherhood never intended the organization to become a political party—at least, not until the revolution of 1958. The Iraqi Muslim Brotherhood saw its mission as beyond that of the national state boundaries. In its discourse it sought to emphasize the renaissance of the Muslim *umma*. This mission was all-encompassing: social, political, intellectual, and certainly religious. As such, it was not to be bounded by the limitations of the nation-state. The leaders of the organization clearly believed that a collective departure from true Islam was the main cause of the desperate conditions people endured not only in Iraq but elsewhere in the Muslim world.³

In his memoirs Shaykh al-Sawaf acknowledged the symbolism of the caliphate in the context of Iraq. This is extremely important, as Baghdad was the centre of the Muslim caliphate for nearly five centuries (762–1258).⁴ The imagery of Baghdad as the seat of the 'Abbasid caliphate must have been alive not only to al-Sawaf but also among other activists within the Iraqi Muslim Brotherhood. However, al-Sawaf was cautious when he

³ Interview with Nu'man al-Samara'i, first leader of the Iraqi Islamic Party, Damascus, October 2007.

⁴ Muhammad Mahmud al-Sawaf, *Min sijil thikrayati* [From the records of my memory], Cairo: Dar al-E'tisam, 1987, p. 13.

dealt with this sensitive issue of resurrecting the old caliphate. In his sermons and memoirs he did not specifically elaborate or call for the return of the caliphate in Iraq. In fact, he reminded his followers that his main goal was to install justice and equality among people, eradicate poverty and ignorance, and guide people to return to the tenets of Islam and the implementation of Islamic law (*shari'a*).⁵

The caliphate must have been a long-term goal, and not an immediate concern for the founder of the Iraqi Muslim Brotherhood. Shaykh al-Sawaf did not think that the 1940s and 1950s was the right time to invoke such grand designs for the newly created Iraqi state. In fact, he himself did not enter the political arena. He tolerated the policies of the Iraqi monarchy, while focusing mainly on what he regarded as dangers of the communist and nationalist ideologies, both seen as leading to greater secularization of Iraqi society. This meant that al-Sawaf was prepared to adopt political pragmatism. Together with Abdul Karim Zaidan, the second General Guide of the Iraqi branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, al-Sawaf realized the difficulty of establishing unity between religion and politics. But Zaidan differed from al-Sawaf on the caliphate question. He acknowledged the importance of establishing the rule of Islam through a return to the caliphate. Zaidan made it an absolute priority on the grounds that the rule of the *shari'a* could not be established without having the will, authority, and power of an *imam*, usually referred to as the caliph.⁶

However, Zaidan was not clear on the best process for the Muslim *umma* to choose its caliph or his deputy.⁷ He listed a number of possibilities similar to current Western-style democracies, claiming that all had a resemblance to historical procedures leading to the empowerment of the early Rightly Guided Caliphs (*al-khulafa al-rashidun*). The Iraqi Muslim Brotherhood adhered fully to the strategy of the Egyptian mother organization in prioritizing the establishment of the caliphate, though it was considered a by-product of actual preliminary achievements. The total integration of Muslim nations culturally, economically and socially and the creation of a super-Islamic union were seen as prerequisites for appointing a caliph.⁸

⁵ Ibid., p. 15.

⁶ Abdul Karim Zaidan, *Usul al-da'wa* [The principles of the Islamic mission], Baghdad: al-Manar Islamic Bookshop, 1976, p. 196.

⁷ Ibid., p. 200.

⁸ Hasan al-Banna, *Islamuna: Fifth Conference 1938*, Cairo: Dar al-E'tisam, n.d., p. 50.

THE CALIPHATE AS NOSTALGIA

The dramatic events of the 1958 revolution against the monarchy, and the consequent repression of the Muslim Brotherhood in Iraq, persuaded the new leadership of the need to form a political wing.⁹ Ethical values, Islamic education, and missionary work had been the major tenets of the movement in the previous ten years or so. The leadership had not pursued a confrontational policy or ever questioned the legitimacy of the monarchy. The Iraqi Muslim Brotherhood leadership had appreciated that the monarchy had limited resources at its disposal. In their opinion Iraq needed time, political reform, education, and moral guidance to carry out the desired changes required by the people.¹⁰

THE IRAQI ISLAMIC PARTY (IIP)

The newly formed party extended the aims and ideology of its mother organization. It had to juggle between the stringent party promulgation laws and the main goals of the Muslim Brotherhood organization without losing its authenticity.

On the nature of the state envisaged by the IIP, Article 2 of its first manifesto states that the aim of the party is to fully apply the rules of Islam in all aspects of life, that is, both individual and state aspects. The party was clear in its aim of campaigning to establish an Islamic state through political means.¹¹ There was no reference to the caliphate in the manifesto. Political pragmatism necessitated the downsizing of goals to fit party promulgation laws and the reality of the ethnically diverse Iraqi society. Successive Iraqi regimes refused the right of association to religious-based parties or parties with transnational links and agendas. This put serious limitations on the IIP when it came to realizing a vision of the Islamic caliphate.

From 1958 to the early 1990s politics in Iraq were characterized by serious upheavals. Government repression impeded all sorts of political parties and natural progression of political thought. The opportunity arose with the weakening of the Iraqi regime after the invasion of Kuwait in 1990. All sorts of political parties representing the divisions and diversity of Iraqi society sprang into action in exile.

⁹ Interview with Nu'man al-Samara'i, Damascus, October 2007.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Kazum Ahmad al-Mashayikhi, *Tarikh nash'at al-bizb al-islami al-iraqi* [The genesis of the Iraqi Islamic Party], Baghdad: al-Raqim Library, 2005, p. 32.

POLITICAL IDEOLOGY OF THE IRAQI ISLAMIC PARTY

The IIP's ideas, goals, expectations, and actions mirrored the Iraqi and international Muslim Brotherhood ideology. Close organizational cooperation with sister organizations ensured strict adherence to the original principles laid out by Hasan al-Banna. The main purpose behind IIP ideology is to offer changes in state and society to ensure its adherence to Islamic ethics and the implementation of *shari'a*.¹² This goal has always been implicit in the writings of party's ideologues and activists. However, the dynamics and actions were dictated by context and the peculiar make-up of Iraqi society. Repetitive themes, discourses, signs, and framing offered by the IIP served to reproduce and project the ideals and political structure of the early 'righteous' caliphs without naming them. Again, the imagery of the caliphate shaped its political discourse without actually calling for the establishment of a caliphate in Baghdad.

After its inception in the 1960s the IIP promoted the creation of an Islamic state through election of a consultative council analogous to parliamentary democracy.¹³ However, it was unclear in the party's first constitution whether it was ready to accept true participatory democracy with other secular trends. This vague political position is probably due to the party's political experience in the 1950s and 1960s, which was shaped by a destructive struggle with the Communists and Arab nationalists. The reciprocal animosity and acute ideological polarization were not conducive to free political space.

It is worth noting that neither the Muslim Brotherhood nor its political wing, the IIP, had any experience of governance or real participatory politics. Their dynamics and moods of action from 1959 were those of secretive or covert organizations. Both the original programme of 1960 and the one promulgated in the 1990s offered only generalities. The party committed itself to a set of objectives—for example, the struggle to end poverty—in addition to implementing Islam as a religious and political framework for society and polity. The first party manifesto reflected general political principles and objectives. One section of the document was dedicated to the economy.

In thirteen articles of the manifesto there were no more than bullet points or slogans lacking clear definitions. For example, Article 42 states

¹² Ayad al-Samara'i, editor's column, *Dar al-Salam* (May 1997), p. 4.

¹³ al-Mashaykhi, *Tā'rikh*, p. 34.

that the party believes in the protection of the private ownership of property, while Article 44 criminalizes usury, monopoly, and all actions causing harm to society. Article 48 states that the party believes in the need to develop the Iraqi economy.¹⁴ These formulas had an immense weight of religious sentiment behind them. They were written to stress the religious identity of the party in the face of the strong secular government and public life in Iraq at the time.

The distinction between being a political party and being an all-encompassing Islamic trend was still in its evolutionary stage. Emphasis was placed on the moral well-being of the state, society, and individual. In an opening article the editor of *Dar al-Salam* (a fortnightly magazine established in Britain in 1992 to represent the IIP's political views) prioritized the party's message of reshaping the moral structure of the Iraqi people, considered a prelude to the strengthening of Islamic civilization.¹⁵ In the 1990s the leadership of the party was exposed to the experience of free democratic space in the West as several leading activists had already been exiled by Saddam Hussein in the 1980s and 1990s. However, as a result of my familiarity with the various levels of leadership in exile, I observed that the new experience of being based in the West and living in democratic societies such as Britain touched only a limited number of party activists. No real effort was spent to disseminate new political and ideological shifts to the rank and file of the party. It was virtually impossible for the leadership in exile to relay their political experience to the covert part of the organization in Iraq.

The IIP moved towards the discourse of purely political rule. The caliphate was not invoked at all. It was not considered a religious entity. Hence it was never mentioned in the original 1960 manifesto or later ones written in the 1990s. In a multi-ethnic society such as Iraq the IIP advocated true political pluralism and equal citizenship. Power is considered open to all political participants, based on the choices of people. In Article 1 of a document entitled 'Political Change in Iraq' the party commits itself to the establishment of plural and constitutional rule.¹⁶ This political evolution is by no means a collective theme adopted by all members and branches of the Iraqi Muslim Brotherhood. Pockets of different political ideologies within

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 40.

¹⁵ Ayad al-Samara'i, editor's column, *Dar al-Salam*, October 1998, p. 5.

¹⁶ Document from the archives of the IIP in exile entitled 'Political Change in Iraq', 8 February 1999.

the Muslim Brotherhood movement existed in various parts of Iraq. Political repression prevented the organization from creating effective network of contacts and communications to disseminate their literature. As a result, clandestine members were not linked effectively with the leadership in exile, and this resulted in diverse opinions among the rank and file.

One has to concur when reading the party's main newspaper, *Dar al-Salam*, that the IIP endeavoured to transcend religious particularities among different Muslim sects.¹⁷ Faced with stiff challenges dictated by polarized communities in Iraq, the editorial board was eventually forced to contend with the struggle to represent the Sunni community. To overcome the ethnic diversity of Iraq the IIP developed a strong national discourse, calling for a unified—even highly centralized—Iraqi state. Concurrently, on the pages of its main media outlet, the party promoted a paramount Islamic identity for the country to dampen ethnic and sectarian tendencies such as Kurdish nationalism and the community's fears of the dominance of the Arab identity, associated with the ruling group in Iraq since the establishment of the monarchy. Furthermore, the IIP tolerated the Kurds' desire to maintain their autonomy in their regions, but within the borders of a unified Iraq.

To get an accurate measure of the IIP's political evolution one has to refer to the articles posted in *Dar al-Salam* a decade after the re-launch of the party in the UK. In an opening article the editor says that the Islamists cannot be an obstacle to political openness and ideological and cultural pluralism, reasoning that the Islamists will be the first to reap the fruit of political liberalization in a country such as Iraq. Furthermore, he posited that re-Islamizing of society can only happen if it enjoys free will. This is achievable when society is open to all political and ideological trends from which it can choose the Islamic option.¹⁸ The editor also stressed the need to bridge the gap between different political trends and ideologies through contact and dialogue with the main Iraqi opposition groups, including secular, nationalist, Kurdish and Shi'a groups. This political position became the theme of all Muslim Brotherhood organizations in the Arab world after they realized that they were the first victims of political repression and exclusion under authoritarian regimes. The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood was the first to enter parliamentary elections, in 1984. Its leadership

¹⁷ Ayad al-Samara'i, editor's column, *Dar al-Salam*, October 1998, p. 4.

¹⁸ Ayad al-Samara'i, editor's column, *Dar al-Salam*, September 2000, p. 4.

declared its support for democracy that acknowledges political pluralism, the peaceful transfer of power, and the fact that the nation was the source of all powers, in its election programme in 1995.¹⁹

The Iraqi Muslim Brotherhood and its political wing initially struggled to rid the traditional system of governance of Western influences, but never contemplated overthrowing the monarchy or the regimes that supplanted it to create a new state based on indigenous Islamic values and practices. Successive Iraqi regimes were not only exploitative, they also ran contrary to a variety of interpretations of economic, social, and political requirements of the Islamic faith. The IIP advocated a constitutionalist approach to political change during the sanctions years (1990–2003). The core idea rested on a combination of Western ideas about the supremacy of constitutionally prescribed representative bodies and the recognition of traditional Islamic notions of the authority of Islam. The authority of Islam can be directly enforceable in moral and religious matters but may not necessarily be part of a system of political authority. However, the party advocated that at no time must any legal enactment of the state be at variance with the sacred principles of Islam.

The above principle was incorporated in the new Iraqi constitution drafted after the American invasion in 2003. Members of the IIP often called this constitutionalist approach their strategy to establish a civil society. It is still unclear whether this political realism is shared by all segments of the Iraqi Muslim Brotherhood, including the political wing. There was a realization that religious texts are always open to reinterpretation depending on the context, political experience, and the intellectual discipline of individual members of the leadership. According to a senior party ideologue, there is no clear-cut agreement among members of the Iraqi Muslim Brotherhood on the shape and form of the government they strive to achieve.²⁰ The caliphate is a political entity; as such, it should not be included in discourses on religion.²¹ Hence, the people and the context of their existence are the only determinants of the political system they choose.

¹⁹ Tawfiq al-Wa'i Yousif, *al-Fikr al-siyasi al-mua'sire'nd al-ikhwan al-muslimin* [Contemporary political thought of the Muslim Brotherhood], Kuwait: al-Manar Bookshop, 2001, p. 56.

²⁰ Interview with Osama al-Tikriti, leader of the IIP in exile (1989–2000), and member of Iraqi House of Representatives (2010–2011), London, 14 May 2011.

²¹ Ibid.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

CONCLUSION

The overwhelming majority of Muslim jurists theologically justify the religious dimension of the caliphate.²² Unity of religion and state (*din wa dawla*) is one of the major themes and slogans propagated by the Muslim Brotherhood. It is important to note that the context in which the Muslim Brotherhood struggled to resurrect the caliphate was an era of direct colonialism. However, after the advent of the independent nation-state in the Middle East, the struggle for revival of the caliphate was relegated to no more than an abstract notion, a mere nostalgia for a lost past. The realism of the Muslim Brotherhood meant that the leadership emphasized political and religious unity of the Muslim *umma* that would be the natural result of close cooperation and integration of independent Muslim states, as first stipulated by Hasan al-Banna.²³ From that time the caliphate was never an immediate or a burning issue. In the past sixty years the struggle of the Muslim Brotherhood has mainly been over the limited political space that a succession of Arab authoritarian regimes tried to circumscribe and control. This struggle has induced a kind of 'secularizing' political effect within the organization, to the point where the political success of the Islamist Turkish Justice and Development Party gained it admiration from many Islamist organizations, including the oldest in the Arab world, the Muslim Brotherhood, and its many offshoots such as the IIP.

The caliphate system will remain a topic of debate between those who identify it as the right to rule by a supreme religious and political figurehead and those who deny its religious theme. However, in the discourse of the Iraqi Muslim Brotherhood and its political wing, the IIP, this mode of political governance will remain grounded in a distant nostalgia, hardly invoked in real political situations and negotiations. The seat of past glory, Baghdad, its ancient splendour, memory of its intellectual, artistic, and scientific achievements will continue to inspire future generations of political activists, poets, ideologues, and leaders as much as it enchanted a previous generation. For the moment, the main Sunni Islamist movement associated with the Muslim Brotherhood can only recall the caliphate as a source of inspiration, a nostalgic yearning for a bygone era whose example

²² Muhammed Ahmed al-Rashid, *Usul al-ifta' wa'l-ijtihad al-tatbiki* [Principles of religious opinion and applied jurisprudence], vol. II, Vancouver: al-Mihrab Publishing, 2003, p. 56.

²³ al-Banna, *Islamuna*, p. 50.

THE CALIPHATE AS NOSTALGIA

can only be followed without being directly invoked. Muslim Brotherhood activists realize that the religious obligation to uphold the caliphate is difficult to realize at the moment. This is because the caliphate has always been dependent on a theocratic leadership. The diversity of Iraqi political trends, ethnicities, and sects all militate against the realization of a dream. The Muslim Brotherhood has accepted these difficulties and moved beyond an unrealistic fixation.

THE CALIPHATE IN CONTEMPORARY ARAB TV CULTURE

Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen

Ever since a modern Arab public culture emerged in the late nineteenth century the institution of the caliphate has been under discussion: is it a necessary prerequisite for an Islamic polity? How must it be organized? Is it related to the dwindling fortunes of the Muslims, and were the Ottomans truly caliphs?

This chapter will move from these elite debates towards the treatment of the caliphate in contemporary Arab television drama. Much mass culture, and certainly much television culture, is often produced by members of the same elites who write the intellectual treatises. But the intended audience is much bigger, and the means of reaching it are adjusted accordingly. Focus here will be on treatments in fiction, which give the producers a relative freedom to insert not only characters, situations and subjects, but also emotional dimensions that are difficult to employ in other genres. My particular interest will be how contemporary television drama deals with the caliphate as a religious and political institution: is it considered a legitimate form of rule? Or even religiously sanctioned? What characterized the good ruler? How do they understand their position, and what are they aspiring to do when in office? What is the caliph's relation to his subjects? Do the dramas make statements about a specifically Islamic political culture that could be

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

emulated? And are there lessons to be learned about statecraft today? The fact that the modern Arab TV drama has emerged since the 1970s—that is, alongside the rise of modern Arab autocracy, and the so-called Islamic awakening—makes this last question particularly pertinent.

To answer these questions, I have selected four recent and successful TV dramas about key figures in the long history of the caliphate: ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, Harun al-Rashid and his sons, Baybars, and Abdülhamid II. These four personalities have all been the subjects of full-length dramatic biographies in the special Arab TV drama genre of the thirty-episode *musalsal* (serial) running during the month of Ramadan. They are, moreover, especially relevant for my purposes, in that they represent four major periods (Umayyad, ‘Abbasid, Mamluk, and Ottoman) and four different themes in the modern historiography of the caliphate: the pious ideal, the golden age, the political instrumentalization, and the demise. And the serials make statements about these themes. I could also have selected the four Rightly Guided Caliphs, as their contemporary relevance is significant indeed, and there are also *musalsalat* devoted to them. Those serials are, however, more akin to hagiography and thus closer to the *musalsalat* about the prophets and the first Medinan community. It is precisely the distance from the primordial, holy age that makes the other periods and their historiographical and fictional treatment claim an affinity with our age, thus presenting their audiences with historical material that invites not pious emulation, but historical reflection and moral evaluation. And that is what interests me here.

To prepare for an analysis of the contemporary dramatic interpretations, the chapter will begin with an introduction to the early modern Arab fictional treatment of these figures as a background and contrast to the TV dramas. It will then move through selected themes of the four serials, with special emphasis on the last one, to end with a general discussion of the caliphate as depicted in Arab TV drama of the 2000s.

DISCUSSING THE CALIPHATE

The Arab public deliberations on the caliphate may be said to have three foundational periods, each defined by a text. The first period was ushered in by the introduction of the caliphate as a source of contemporary political legitimacy and a tool of domestic and foreign policy of the Ottoman empire. Here the Ottoman constitution of 1876, which defined the caliphate in relation to the sultanate, but transcending the Ottoman territory

to be a protector of Muslims all over the world, can be considered the foundational text for much of this discussion. The Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid II's (1876–1909) attempt at 'playing the caliphate card' was not unsuccessful, and certainly created a lot of anxiety in European capitals.

Abdülhamid's abolition of the parliament led to the emergence of a constitutionalist opposition, which had little interest in the issue of the caliphate. But an anti-Ottoman version of the caliphate was launched in 'Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi's (1855–1902) famous treatise *Umm al-qura*, a fictional report on a pan-Islamic conference in Mecca on the issue of the caliphate, serialized in the famous Islamic reformist journal *al-Manar* in 1901–2. Al-Kawakibi's caliph was nominated by this assembly and would sit for a limited term, and instead of the subjects pledging loyalty (*bay'a*) to him, he was to pledge loyalty to the assembly. Sovereignty, in short, rested with the *umma* and its representatives, not with the caliph himself. Al-Kawakibi, who was in exile in Cairo, also wrote another book, on 'the characteristics of tyranny'¹ (*istibdad*), an attack on Sultan Abdülhamid and his policies. The politicization of the caliphate in modern parlance introduced by the Ottoman constitution, was here employed against the Ottomans themselves.

A third phase of the discussion was set off with the formal abolition of the caliphate in 1924, leading to several important international conferences on the future of the caliphate, as well as an intense debate on 'Ali 'Abd al-Raziq's book *al-Islam wa usul al-hukm* (Islam and the foundations of rule), which argued that the caliphate was a historical accident and aberration, and that its abolition was a chance to refocus the religion on the true teachings of the Qur'an and the *sunna*. Several contemporary rulers in the Arab world organized congresses on the future of the caliphate. These political initiatives and debates came to nothing, and although decolonization after the Second World War gave rise to new pan-Islamic initiatives, these were not formulated around the obligation, or even desirability, of reinstating the caliphate.²

¹ Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, Oxford University Press, 1962, p. 271.

² On the history of the caliphate as a modern pan-Islamic symbol in the late Ottoman era and after, see the by now classical studies Jacob Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam*, Oxford University Press, 1994; Martin Kramer, *Islam Assembled: The Advent of the Muslim Congresses*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1986; and Reinhard Schulze, *Islamischer Internationalismus im 20. Jahrhundert*, Leiden: Brill, 1990.

EARLY FICTIONAL TREATMENT OF THE HISTORICAL CALIPHATE

Next to these discussions, a broader cultural renaissance (*nahda*) evolved, re-examining the Arab literary and cultural heritage as a source of inspiration for contemporary artistic, cultural, and political expressions. The classical Arab historians such as al-Tabari, al-Baladhuri, and Ibn Khaldun now became available in print, but a new historiography emerged too, following the progression of the Arab people through time. The history writers of the *nahda* considered history as a human and moral tale about the identity and formation of the Arabs of today, and for the wider multi-ethnic history of the various caliphates, the contemporary European concept of civilization was introduced as an organizing principle.³

The most widely circulated version of this civilizational history was the five-volume *Tā'rikh al-tamaddun al-islami* (History of Islamic civilization) by Jurji Zaydan (1861–1914). Zaydan, a Syrian migrant to Cairo like al-Kawakibi, established the very successful scientific and educational magazine *al-Hilal* (1892) wherein the civilizational history was serialized before it was published by his own publishing house, Dar al-Hilal. Although himself an Oriental Christian, Jurji Zaydan could still consider himself a representative of a historical Islamic civilization which he in many ways defended against Western accusations of barbarism and inferiority. His treatments of the various caliphs and their reigns would seek to evaluate their moral and humanist positions and demonstrate that their personal qualities of generosity, openness, and interest in culture and poetry had been a prerequisite, and not a consequence, of general prosperity in their domains.

Jurji Zaydan also published a series of twenty-one historical novels, many of them centred round the life of a caliph, and partly organized in chronological sequence. Inspired by Walter Scott and Alexandre Dumas, Zaydan's approach was to insert a number of fictional figures around the historical persons (or expand on figures named in passing by the historians) and involve them in complicated romances. These are intended to entertain, but also to highlight more ethical or moral dimensions of the historical caliphs, or introduce some of Zaydan's overall concerns, such as Arab versus Persian, religious openness versus bigotry, or freedom versus tyranny.

In this respect, Jurji Zaydan was certainly a liberal in his age, but all the while he remained a believer in social hierarchy and authority, as Thomas

³ Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, pp. 114–15.

Philipp has pointed out.⁴ In the only historical novel about his own time, *al-Inqilab al-uthmani* (1910), he presents the ‘father’ of the Ottoman constitution, Midhat Pasha (1822–83), as a true hero. And yet his overall interpretation remained that freedom and rights came too abruptly to the subjects of the Ottoman state, so that the period under Abdülhamid II was in a way not merely a step back to despotism, but perhaps rather a necessary period for the population to mature and come to terms with its newly proclaimed rights.⁵ We shall return to this point at the end.

ARAB TELEVISION DRAMA AND ISLAM

About a hundred years have passed since the demise of the caliphate and its first treatments in modern Arab fiction. To modern scriptwriters and producers of modern Arab TV drama, the caliphate is long gone. For decades the ideological order of the day was Arab nationalism, which considered the Ottoman period a time of national oppression and anti-modernism, especially in the Hamidian period. Authoritarianism is, however, also the order of the day in many Arab countries which may have elected presidents or popular kings, and formal constitutions, but also suffer under a political system that gives monopolistic powers to the executive, well beyond the control of elected parliaments. The powerful rulers of the contemporary Arab world may thus have more in common with the ruling culture of the caliphal regimes than the constitutionalist texts would have us believe.

Moreover, the most vocal criticism of the authoritarian ruling traditions comes from Islamists who want to install a political system defined by Islam. Except for some of the groups discussed in this volume, these Islamists are generally not much concerned about the caliphate. But the issue of the compatibility or incompatibility of the current state structures and styles of ruling with a presumed Islamic ideal is thus back on the agenda.

Long under full state control, television in most Arab countries has been an important instrument of state ideological and cultural policies. TV drama has been employed as a means to inculcate in viewers modern civil values and virtues, as seen by the producers and endorsed by state censors. Islamic values were for long strikingly downplayed in Arab TV drama. By

⁴ Thomas Philipp, *Gurgi Zaidan: His Life and Thought*, Beirut and Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1979, pp. 77–9.

⁵ Ibid., p. 77.

the 1990s, however, things were beginning to change. The Egyptian Ministry of Culture itself, and some film producers, began to produce material aimed at protecting the country from the threat of militant Islamism, some of it under the heading of 'Enlightenment' (*tanwir*).⁶ Today Egyptian state television has accepted a growing number of so-called 'religious dramas', some of which are also set in twentieth-century Egypt, which is depicted, and judged, by Islamist standards.⁷

Syrian TV drama, by contrast, has been reluctant to engage in specifically religious themes. Many scriptwriters and directors of Syrian TV drama are of a secularist bent and use drama to criticize at least certain religious practices.⁸ But even if a positive interest in religion is rare, one of the strongest genres of Syrian drama is the historical serials.⁹ In these dramas Islam is often depicted as an integral part of social life, but high morals and high religiosity do not necessarily go hand and hand.

'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz

The first serial to be considered here is *'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz* (Egypt, 1995), written by a successful Egyptian playwright, 'Abd al-Salam Amin. Sometimes nicknamed 'the fifth of the Rightly Guided', 'Umar has sometimes been treated by Islamic historiography as the exception to impious Umayyad rule. This is also in evidence in the series, where internal rivalries and cynicism are tearing the Umayyad dynasty apart, a process that 'Umar can only postpone. Often quoting the Qur'an or *hadith*, Umar is driven by a conviction that the Umayyads as rulers must temper their personal greed and divide their personal income from that of the state. He is thus presented as taking a keen interest in the rule of the caliphate without, however, dreaming of becoming caliph himself. Nevertheless, the most famous feats of his predecessors (the construction of the Umayyad Mosque, the introduction of an Islamic mint) appear to be on the advice of 'Umar. And

⁶ Walter Armbrust, 'Islamists in Egyptian Cinema', *American Anthropologist*, New Series, 104, 3 (2002), 922–31, p. 924.

⁷ These will be treated in a forthcoming article (Skovgaard-Petersen, 'Daawa in Modern Egyptian TV-Series: The *musalsalat* on Shaykh Shaarawi and Shaykh al-Maraghi', *Performative Islam* (forthcoming))

⁸ Christa Salamandra, 'Creative Compromise: Syrian Television Makers between Secularism and Islamism', *Contemporary Islam*, 2 (2008) 177–189.

⁹ John Shoup, 'As it Was, and as it Should be Now: Al Andalus in Contemporary Arab Television Dramas', *Transnational Broadcasting Studies* 1, 2 (2005) 191–99.

THE CALIPHATE IN CONTEMPORARY ARAB TV CULTURE

even as a boy he alone dares to challenge them, quoting the Qur'an (38:26): 'O David, indeed We have made you a *khalifa* upon the earth, so judge between the people in truth and do not follow [your own] desire, as it will lead you astray from the way of Allah.'

As governor of Medina he appoints a council of jurists to assure the legality of his decisions (episode 26). When he finally becomes Caliph himself, he sets out to build up a system of assistance to the poor, and he orders the collection of the *sunna* of the Prophet (in episode 36). The idea is that the last of the witnesses of the Prophetic age are dying out, and the caliphate must rest on a textual foundation to become a durable and just political institution.

HARUN AL-RASHID AND HIS SONS

'Abd al-Salam Amin also made a serial about Harun al-Rashid (*al-Amir al-majhul*), but here I have selected a more recent Syrian serial, *Abna al-Rashid, al-Amin wa l-Ma'mun* (2006, dir. Shawqi al-Majari), written by Ghassan Zakariyya. This serial relates more directly to the positions of Jurji Zaydan, who wrote two of his historical novels on this material: *al-'Abbasa ukht al-Rashid* (1906), and *al-Amin wa l-Ma'mun* (1907). This period (786–833) of the 'Abbasid era was particularly attractive to Zaydan because in his eyes it represented a forerunner to the modern *nahda* of which he himself was part. The great 'Abbasid caliphs had been interested in philosophy and the arts, they had employed people irrespective of their religion, and they had studied and translated the sciences of the ancient Greeks. Other themes central to Zaydan and his time were the differences and rivalry between Arabs and Persians (the latter represented by the clever Barmaki family of *wazirs*) and the issue of homoeroticism that is associated with al-Amin and his reign.¹⁰

Abna al-Rashid follows the three Caliphs Harun, al-Amin, and al-Ma'mun. The interest of the serial is in nature of their reigns and their personalities. Harun, highly successful but curiously cruel, is facing the prospect that, although they are both able men, neither of his sons has inherited his astuteness as a ruler.

In episodes 5–6 there is the protracted story of 'Ali ibn Mahan, the governor of Khurasan. Harun receives many complaints about his governor

¹⁰ Joseph Massad, *Desiring Arabs*, Chicago University Press, 2007, p. 59.

and sends a trusted man, Sahl, to investigate. Sahl can confirm many of the misgivings, and he gives 'Ali a warning. 'Ali then proceeds to send lavish gifts and a letter with flattery and assurances of loyalty. In Baghdad, the *wazir* Ja'far al-Barmaki complains to Harun's son al-Ma'mun that the sheer size of the gifts is proof of 'Ali ibn Mahan's corruption. When al-Ma'mun decides to raise the issue with his father, Harun explains that Khurasan was always the most volatile province, and thus in need of a governor who can rule and obey. 'Ali ibn Mahan does that, and his personal gains may even ensure his loyalty.

Another episode (10–11), taken from the classical historians, is also very telling of Harun al-Rashid's understanding of his power. This is the famous story of 'Abbasa, Harun's sister, and Ja'far al-Barmaki: Harun needs both of them as counsellors, and to make this more legitimate he orders them to marry so that they can be in the room together as much as he needs it. However, he orders them not to consummate the marriage. Yet after a while 'Abbasa seduces Ja'far and becomes pregnant. Her mother advises her to avoid Ja'far and go to live with her sister, out of Harun's sight. When she asks him for permission to leave, Harun guesses the reason. He summons Ja'far, who was always his favourite, and who does not know she is pregnant. Harun asks him: 'Do you want to have a son whose uncle would be the commander of the faithful?' and adds, sorrowfully but mercilessly, 'You have made what will be your end, Ja'far, although you know that I can forgive anything, except insubordination.'¹¹ Ja'far is then cut into forty pieces and distributed all over Baghdad. As he later explains to al-Ma'mun, personal sentiments must not stand in the way of the interest of the state, and if a ruler does not act decisively the problem will come back to haunt him.

This story is also at the centre of interest in Jurji Zaydan's novel *al-'Abbasa ukht al-Rashid*. Here the dramatic dialogue is less gripping, and the political point more explicit, directed, in 1906, against the tyranny of Abdülhamid II. When 'Abbasa points out to her brother that begetting children in marriage is in conformity with God's law, so that Harun has, in fact, ruled against the will of God, Harun knows that she is right, but does not change his decision. 'He was accustomed to people agreeing with his opinions or executing his orders, whether they were justified or not. This is the condition of those who hold absolute power, especially in that time.'¹²

¹¹ *Abna al-Rashid*, 2007, episode 11.

¹² *al-'Abbasa ukht al-Rashid*, 1906, p. 174. Quotation here from Ann-Laure Dupont,

The interest of both Zaydan in 1906 and Zakariyya in 2006 is the nature of absolute rule, especially in its dynastic form. In his moralizing style, Zaydan wants to alert his readers to the dangers of unchecked absolutism, and he addresses the reader directly to make sure that the point comes across. Writing in contemporary Syria, Ghassan Zakariyya is perhaps less concerned with making the point than with exploring the mind and characters of three different rulers in a dynasty that may remain relevant to Arab politics today (for example, the relationship between Hafez al-Asad and his brother Rifaat in the 1980s and 90s).¹³

al-Zahir Baybars

The next key event to be looked at is the fall of the caliphate in Baghdad in 1258, and its revival in Cairo after 1260. This is one of the most dramatic and colourful episodes in Arab Islamic history, with the demise of Saladin's Ayyubid dynasty, the defeat of the Sixth Crusade at Mansura in 1250, the rule of Shajarat al-Durr and the rivalry of the main Mamluk generals, the Mongol devastation of Baghdad, and their surprising defeat at Ain Jalut in 1260. As such it has been treated by modern Arab novelists, from Zaydan and onwards, and there was also a major film, *Wa islamah*, produced in 1962. Two major TV serials have been produced using the material, both released in Ramadan 2005. Like the feature film, the Egyptian serial, *al-Fursan*, concentrates on the 1250s and the decadence at the court of Shajarat al-Durr, and it ends briefly after the battle of Ain Jalut.

The Syrian drama, on the other hand, continues to 1276, as it is a biopic of Baybars, the Mamluk soldier who escaped the infighting of the generals in the 1250 and murdered Sultan Qutuz in 1260 to establish himself as a highly successful ruler for sixteen years. Written by Ghassan Zakariyya, *al-Zahir Baybars* (2005, dir. Muhammad al-'Aziziyya) once again delves into the psychology of the ruler with all its complexities, avoiding the temptation to simply stage a hagiography. Baybars is depicted as a lonely man who is feared and respected by many but known by few. These are primarily a

Jurji Zaydan, écrivain réformiste et témoin de la renaissance arabe, Paris and Damascus: Ifpo-cnrs, 2006, p. 571.

¹³ In an interview with me in January 2011, Ghassan Zakariyya mentioned how the BBC miniseries *House of Saddam* (produced after *Abna al-Rashid*) had similarly dealt with the former Iraqi President's deep conviction that any sign of weakness or leniency might lead to his downfall.

friend from childhood captivity, Munsef, and Ruqiyya, a bondmaid from Hama who became the love of his youth. Both are invented and developed by Zakariyya. The series makes a study of the four rival Mamluk generals and presents them as epitomizing four different approaches to statecraft.¹⁴ Baybars appears to be upholding an ethic of Mamluk loyalty, but after much procrastination ends up violating that ethos by killing Sultan Qutuz at the famous hare-hunt after the victory of Ain Jalut. In the series many of Baybars' finest and most visionary decisions as a sultan are seen as atonement for the murder, and he does not know how to enjoy the courtly luxury that surrounds him. This, however, is not interpreted as an expression of a religious bent, and the series shuns any display of his personal religiosity, although there would have been many obvious occasions to do so (such as the battles with the Crusaders or his restoration of al-Azhar). Baybars, in short, is struggling with his own demons, rather than Satan's, and the driving force behind his good acts is not seen as a fear of God, but as a service to human civilization.

This is also in evidence in the treatment of the caliphate. The last Caliph, al-Musta'sim (r. 1242–58), is shown as dignified but impotent, and perhaps also lacking the necessary foresight. For example, he trusts the ruler of Damascus, al-Nasir Yusuf, who manipulates him to refuse to recognize Shajarat al-Durr as the ruler of Egypt. When the Mongol army arrives before Baghdad, al-Nasir Yusuf does not respond to al-Musta'sim's appeals, and the Caliph himself is too tardy and inefficient in raising an army. After the fall of Baghdad al-Musta'sim is wrapped in a rug and killed, and thrown in the river Tigris. Episode 13 shows the fall of Baghdad in graphic detail, with much suffering of women and children, and al-Musta'sim is seen as an old man who suffers like the rest of the inhabitants, but perhaps with more justification, as he had not acted effectively to prevent the disaster and had long underestimated the strength of the Mongols. *Al-Zahir Baybars* shows the fall of Baghdad as an immense human tragedy, and a deep loss of civilization to Mongol barbarism. But the series does not deplore the loss of the caliphate as an institution.

Some years later (in episode 25) a man appears in Damascus claiming to be a son of the caliph al-Musta'sim who has survived in a hospital in Mosul.

¹⁴ Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen, 'The Crusades in Arab Film and TV: The Case of Baybars', in Kurt Villads Jensen and Helle Vogt[0], *Cultural Exchanges during the Crusades*, Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark (forthcoming).

THE CALIPHATE IN CONTEMPORARY ARAB TV CULTURE

Now the Sultan in Cairo, Baybars is informed by his governor in Damascus, who expresses some doubt as to the truth of the claim. Baybars, in turn, and his counsellor Ibn 'Abd al-Zahir immediately see the potential in the man, whatever the truth of his claim: proclaiming a caliph will confer legitimacy on the Mamluk sultanate and underpin its legal order among the Muslims of the region. They consequently decide to transfer the Caliph to Cairo with much ceremony, although they still don't believe in his claim. He is then installed at the court, whereupon the series forgets about him.

THE FALL OF THE CALIPHATE

The last, and the latest, TV drama to be addressed here is *Suqut al-khilafa* (The fall of the caliphate), broadcast in Ramadan 2010. This series is not about the abolition of the caliphate in 1924, but about what caused its fall, dating the decisive events to the reign of Abdülhamid II. According to the scriptwriter, the Egyptian Yusri al-Guindi, the Qataris wanted a lavish series about the Ottoman empire, and he chose the period of Abdülhamid 'because it is little understood and holds many lessons for us Arabs today'.¹⁵ Yusri al-Guindi (b. 1942) is an established playwright who has earlier dealt with many nationalist themes, but has not been known for religious productions. The same may be said about the director, the Jordanian Muhammad al-'Aziziyya, who was also the director of the Baybars series analysed above. Once again, it is written in the *musalsal* tradition of *sira dhatiyya*, a personal biography of a ruler and his struggles, following Abdülhamid from a young age, before his accession to the throne, and ending with his death, which is also depicted as the demise of the old honourable institution of the Muslim and Ottoman caliphate. In this, it mainly follows Abdülhamid's own memoirs, and according to al-Guindi he also drew on the books by his daughters Aisha and Shadia about their father, but, not knowing any other language than Arabic, he did not consult any Turkish or Western scholarship on the man and his period.¹⁶

The reign of Abdülhamid II formed the background of an early Arab TV series *Jamal al-Din al-Afghani* (Egypt, 1980). In line with Arab historiography from the period, the series depicts the Caliph as the enemy of its hero, the reformist visionary al-Afghani, who dies (when confined to the Sultan's

¹⁵ Interview with Yusri al-Guindi, Cairo, 10 March 2011.

¹⁶ Ibid.

territory) in 1897. The two men are not only personal enemies, they also represent two antagonistic ideological positions, enlightenment versus hide-bound despotism. Finally, at the religious level, al-Afghani's reformism is countered by his arch-enemy, the wily Sufi shaykh Abu 'l-Huda who, as court astrologer and counsellor, has significant control over Abdülhamid.

Today, however, things have changed. The stable values of Arab nationalism have given way to a more complicated picture. In 2010 Arab enthusiasm for Turkey increased after its Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, opposed Israel on several occasions. Moreover, in 2008 the most popular TV drama in Egypt was *al-Malik Farouq*, a vindication of the last king who fled the country in 1952 and who had until then generally been depicted in state cultural productions as an incompetent debaucher. Perhaps the time was ripe to spread the *Ottomania* of AK Parti Turkey to its former Arab provinces, and portray Abdülhamid as a Muslim ruler who had valiantly resisted the designs of the European powers of his day.

This would, however, be quite a task. Not that there were not colonial designs; there were, and Abdülhamid did resist them to the best of his abilities. But according to conventional Arab historiography, the measures he employed revealed him as an anti-constitutionalist despot who spied on his people and suppressed the nascent Arab awakening (even if this repression was much exacerbated under his successors, the Young Turks). Added to this, he lost 200,000 square kilometres of territory and ruled at the time of the first Armenian pogrom. And, on a personal level, he ruled from his harem (replete with slaves at a time when Ottoman reformers had tried to eradicate slavery for decades), and relied on certain very traditional Sufi brotherhoods and their shaykhs for his religious and political information. The established heroes of Arab historiography were his enemies: the constitutional movement, to which many famous Arab thinkers were attracted; the capable governor Midhat Pasha, who made his mark with the modernization of Baghdad and Damascus; and the Arab publishers who had to establish themselves in Cairo to avoid his censorship—people such as Rashid Rida and 'Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi, who are still cultural heroes to both pan-Arabists and Islamists, and who wrote virulent attacks on Abdülhamid and his rule.

Against these arguments about the man and his rule, a couple of themes speak in his favour for a contemporary Arab audience: here was a Middle Eastern ruler, besieged by Western imperialists who had designs on his territory and exploited sectarian tensions and his financial difficulties to

interfere in the internal politics of his domains. To defend the empire's independence, Abdülhamid, who was personally pious and pursued a Sunni Islamic cultural policy, invented the policy of pan-Islamism—that is, the propagation of the empire as a Sunni Muslim caliphate serving Muslim interests world-wide, beyond its own domains. Last but not least, there is Abdülhamid's famous rejection of Theodor Herzl's proposal for a Jewish homeland in Palestine. That may count for a lot with Arab audiences.

So what does *Suqut al-khilafa* do for the man, Abdülhamid the ruler and the religious figure? First and foremost, as in the case of King Faruq, it gives him the agency that was never part of the official memory. Abdülhamid is portrayed as the dynamic actor and initiator of policies; almost from the outset he is in control and understands the long-term threats to the empire, responding to the imperialist manoeuvres from a clear realization of their motives. But we do not see the Ottoman alliances with European powers, in particular Abdülhamid's long-term alliance with Germany and personal friendship with Kaiser Wilhelm II. The Ottoman empire is thus not 'the sick man of Europe', because it in no way forms a part of the European 'concert'. The overriding European rivalries of the period, which very much set the stage for Ottoman foreign policy, are ignored, and the dividing-line is drawn between the Ottoman *dar al-Islam* on the one side and the European powers on the other.

Islam is generally quite important in *Suqut al-khilafa*. There are numerous scenes illustrating Abdülhamid's (well attested) personal devotion: he prays, holds up the Qur'an, and pays much respect to religious personalities. Right from the outset he shows concern about the caliphate and *umma* (rather than the empire and its people). More significantly, perhaps, we see him inviting the few people he really trusts to pray with him, as a token of a deep and sincere commitment. Generally speaking, Abdülhamid is portrayed much in the way contemporary Arab monarchs and presidents seek to implant a public image: he is a family man, devoted to his wife and liberal to his closest family (the fact that he had numerous wives and a sizeable harem is glossed over in the series).

If Islam is important in the portrayal of the Sultan's personal life and, along with a deep sense of responsibility to the House of 'Uthman, his foreign policy orientation, it is perhaps less clearly in evidence in his overall attitude to law and rule. The ideas of a reformed Islam that were gaining ground at the time appear of little interest to him. The series introduces both Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and 'Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi—well-

known critics of Abdülhamid in Arabic—but explains that the Sultan does not follow their argumentation, whereas his protégé, Nazem, does and tries to convince him that these men are not in fundamental disagreement with the empire but want it to reform.

This goes for his style of ruling as well. True, Abdülhamid is attentive to the needs of the people he meets in a few scenes, the ordinary people of his empire. Any misrule by this good man, the series implies, would be due to the manipulation of other government figures, and very much against his will and wish. He has a sense of mission and purpose, and high personal ethics which force him to confront his brother-in-law who is involved in murder and financial sleaze. The concerns of the *umma* are constantly on his mind, directing him, but he seems to feel little inclination to actually consult it. There is no scene showing the parliament, which, it is implied, is created and manipulated by Midhat Pasha, and behind him the UK. We see Abdülhamid appoint the preparatory committee on 6 October 1876, but not that he changes it in a decidedly authoritarian direction in December. He hires and fires ministers, almost always with good reason. That is probably a fairly accurate description of Abdülhamid, who spent almost all his time inside the vast compounds of the Yildiz Palace which he erected.¹⁷ This could also be said of many authoritarian Arab rulers of today, and appears related to the above-mentioned theme of the enlightened despot (*al-mustabidd al-mustanir*).

Much of the dramatic dynamics of the series is concentrated in the stormy relationship between Abdülhamid and Midhat Pasha, the highly ambitious governor and minister who represents the European-style reformism of Abdülhamid's predecessors. *Suqut al-khilafa* does not deny Midhat's bureaucratic abilities, but first of all it condemns his megalomania (when he is finally appointed Prime Minister he reveals that he has already had his portrait painted with the new uniform). He is part of a conspiracy that orders the murder of Abdülhamid's uncle 'Abd al-'Aziz, and later forces his brother Murad to abdicate. Even more ominously, Midhat is presented as a crypto-Jew (a *dönme*, which he was not), who serves Jewish and Freemason interests and conspires with the British Ambassador, Henry Elliott.

The two have stormy discussions about the adoption of a constitution and a parliament. Midhat sees these as ways to institute popular sovereignty and participation, and argues that this will also enhance the legitimacy of

¹⁷ François Georgeon. *Abdülhamid II, le sultan caliphe*. Paris: Fayard, 2003, pp. 127–30.

the empire and its policies abroad. This idealism is belied by scenes where Midhat demonstrates that through some newspapers, and by coopting the Istanbul students, he can manipulate public opinion to press for a disastrous war with Russia. When in episode 10 Midhat says that he represents the nation, Abdülhamid retorts by calling a general convention with representatives of all religions and groups to discuss the military and financial situation that Midhat has (allegedly) brought upon the country. The Ottoman *millet* system, with its consultation of religious and community leaders, is thus presented as a more popular, legitimate, and just system of rule than an elected parliament.

The caliphate appears to be the envy and even obsession of European politicians, and the series proposes this as a key framework for understanding the politics of the period, including the Young Turk movement. The fall of the caliphate is seen as taking place at the beginning and the end of Abdülhamid's reign, and not in 1924. The series also makes a clear point that the glory and identity of the Muslims hinge on some sort of reappearance of a Muslim polity, preferably with the name of caliphate. This is a strong revision of both popular and academic Arab historical writing on the Hamidian period.

In spite of a lavish budget of \$25 million and a well-known cast of actors, *Suqut al-khilafa* does not seem to have been a great success. In a survey of Egyptian viewer preferences it came in as number four of the historical serials that year.¹⁸ Nevertheless, its defiant revision of modern Ottoman and Arab history did trigger some public discussion. Some writers echoed lead actor 'Abbas al-Nuri, who in interviews praised Abdülhamid as 'this honourable model who until the last moment of his life defended the Caliphate ... The serial *Fall of the Caliphate* will reveal to the Arab citizen truths that he may utilize to read the contemporary Arab reality.'¹⁹ The Iraqi intellectual Khaled Suleiman, on the other hand, was incensed with what he saw as an 'Orwellian rewriting' of historical facts to place the issue of Palestine at the centre of Ottoman priorities as early as the 1870s and generally make the fall of the caliphate the result of a Jewish conspiracy.²⁰ The Egyptian writer Mahmud Arafat pointed out that al-Guindi, the scriptwriter, erroneously thought that the 1908 coup d'état of the Young Turks was directed

¹⁸ <http://www.ahram.org.eg/307/2010/10/02/54/41094.aspx>, accessed 2 April 2011.

¹⁹ Ahmad Said in *Yum* 7, 18 May 2010.

²⁰ <http://international.daralhayat.com/internationalarticle/158183>, accessed 2 April 2011.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

against the caliphate as an institution, and completely overlooked Abdülhamid's political repression, or even endorsed it, as long as the appropriate attitude towards Palestine was adopted.²¹ Most commentators seemed to agree that, more than a historical investigation, this was first and foremost a political message to modern Arab viewers; but they disagreed over the political wisdom of that message.

CONCLUSIONS

In a recent book, *Gatekeepers of the Arab Past*, Yoav Di Capua quotes Georg Lukacs to the effect that 'what matters therefore in the historical novel is not the retelling of great historical events but the poetic awakening of the people who figured in these events'.²² Arab historical TV dramas too are conceived, written, and produced not just to entertain, or even to educate historically, but also to instil a historical consciousness in their audiences that may lead them towards more contemporary political and social insights and convictions.

Modern Arab fictional treatment of the caliphate is not about divine interference in history, but about the human creation of that history. From Zaydan's novels and onwards, rational factors such as consolidation of power, or psychological factors such as jealousy, are the driving forces in men and women, and thus in history. The protagonists of history distinguish themselves by their capacity—or incapacity—to control selfish and narrow interests and act for the benefit of their subjects. Islam, in these fictional treatments, is not about a personal relationship to God, but about a sense of mission, and keeping the commonweal of the *umma* in sight. The caliphate, in short, is about statecraft. And the writer of fictional history is a moralist.

That, to Zaydan, meant discussing the pitfalls of despotism and tyranny. Although a Christian himself, he did not challenge the concept of a Sunni Muslim caliph ruling over a territory that includes other religious groups. But these groups should have significant religious autonomy. And, more controversially, their members should have equal status with the Sunni subjects. Still more controversially in the 1890s, that would also entail free-

²¹ <http://ar.mideastyouth.com/?p=3930>, accessed 2 April 2011.

²² Yoav Di Capua, *Gatekeepers of the Arab Past: Historians and History Writing in 20th Century Egypt*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009, p. 57.

dom of opinion and conscience. Only then would the caliphate command the respect of its subjects. The caliph, then, could in theory be a legitimate ruler in a caring Muslim *Rechtsstaat*. But that was hard to realize. The threat of *istibdad*, tyranny or despotism, was ever present in a caliphal system where so much power was concentrated in one person. Only in his late novel about the Young Turk coup d'état did Zaydan seem to accept democracy as a relevant type of rule in the East.²³

The contemporary Arab historical TV dramas vary a lot in their attention to historical sources and detail. Some of them, such as the series on Baybars, are based on quite substantial readings of primary material. But, like Zaydan, they are also concerned about individuals and their morals, and, like him, they insert secondary figures such as maids and young officers, or childhood friends, to connect the different story lines and add romance.

The two Syrian dramas on Harun al-Rashid and Baybars take a humanist view of the caliphate as a human institution, upheld and manipulated by humans, for human reasons. And this goes further than the incumbents; the religious significance of the caliphate seems to be of secondary importance to its subjects as well, or (in the latter series) its allies. Whatever it once was, by the time of the great 'Abbasids the caliphate is merely an ordinary state, and at the time of Baybars it is an antiquated symbol upheld for political expediency. In the two Syrian dramas examined in this chapter there is an interest in the caliph (and the sultan) as a ruler who can do good deeds, but can also very easily fall prey to the lure of power, settling scores or pursuing whims that are, in the final instance, immoral. The interest of the dramas, then, is in the issue of statecraft, and its psychological underpinnings: what does it take for a man to make himself ruler, and how does he uphold power? And while Harun is depicted as a tyrant, ever alert to bonds of loyalty, threats, and the importance of never showing any weakness, Baybars, by contrast, is depicted as *al-mustabidd al-mustanir*, the enlightened despot, who, partly out of feeling of guilt for murder, and on the good offices of his friend, works indefatigably to construct an ordered state and employs a fake caliph for that end.

The two Egyptian serials, on the other hand, are less concerned with psychology and characterization, and more with morality and doing the right thing. Both 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz and Abdülhamid are righteous rulers, confronting external enemies and moral decay in the Bani Umayya

²³ Philipp, *Gurgi Zaidan*, pp. 69–80.

and the Bani ‘Uthman, respectively. But while ‘Umar’s almost saintly character and status are in line with classical Arab historiography, the very positive (but still more nuanced) portrayal of Abdülhamid II marks a fundamental revision of established modern Arab historiography, and also of popular culture from the time of Jurji Zaydan to other recent TV dramas. Unlike in the Syrian dramas autocracy is accepted as a fact of life, and not necessarily a problem; that absolute power corrupts is not a notion to which the Egyptian dramas subscribe. On the contrary, it can also be beneficial to the population at large, if the ruler is pious and modest, and empathizes especially with his poorer subjects. The interest is therefore in the ruler’s personal values, which must, it seems, be religious to rein in egoism and greed. Dilemmas occur when the caliph is torn between family loyalty and the interests of the *umma*, but in the cases of ‘Umar and Abdülhamid they come round to choosing the latter. But while ‘Umar struggles to establish the caliphate on the foundations of Islam, with a ‘guardian council’ of *‘ulama*, Abdülhamid is considered right in his distrust of a parliament, and a more corporatist vision of society led by an enlightened ruler is posed as an ideal. Freedom is not seen as civil liberties and rights, but only as freedom from foreign intervention. Rule of the people is not depicted as based on a parliament, but as populism forging an organic bond between the people and their paternalistic ruler, whom they all support, unless they are morally depraved or bought by his enemies.

Here, the contrast between the dramas of Baybars and Abdülhamid II are instructive, in that both are made by the same director, but hold very different messages about religion and politics, in the past and in the present. While religious sentiment is markedly played down in *al-Zahir Baybars*, it is pervasive in the characterization of the good personalities in *Suqut al-khilafa*. And while Baybars is shown as successfully building up Islamic civilization with a caliph as an insignificant figurehead adopted for political expediency, Abdülhamid is depicted as conceiving his power as a religious vocation; he seems more concerned about the survival of the caliphate than about the continuation of the sultanate, or even of his own survival. The caliphate is an honour and a burden, as he states right from the outset, because it is seen as the cornerstone of the Islamic identity of the nation.

KHILAFAT AS THE VICEREGENCY OF HUMANKIND

RELIGION AND STATE IN THE THOUGHT OF NURCHOLISH MADJID

Carool Kersten

With his opposition to the need for restoring or emulating the historical caliphate and the concomitant determinist views on Islamic political authority, the contributions of the Indonesian scholar and public intellectual Nurcholish Madjid to contemporary Muslim thinking can be said to have helped 'demystify' the caliphate. Right from the beginning of his career he clearly positioned himself on the side of the spectrum of Islamic political theorizing occupied by figures such as 'Ali 'Abd al-Raziq, when—as chairman of Indonesia's Association of Muslim Students (HMI)—he launched the provocative slogan 'Islam, Yes! Islamic Party, No!'

This chapter explores the connections between Nurcholish Madjid's view of the relation between religion and state, his thoughts on religious faith, and the epistemological underpinnings of these ideas. Taken together, Madjid's political thought, theology and philosophy of knowledge form an attempt at a comprehensive and coherent 'renewal of Islamic thinking' (*pembaruan pemikiran Islam*), in which the *khilafa* (caliphate) is reinterpreted as an abstraction reflecting the vicegerency of humankind on earth. To appreciate the context in which Madjid developed his innovative way of

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

thinking about Islam and politics it is necessary to have some understanding of the circumstances of his early upbringing, education, and further intellectual formation.

FORMATIVE YEARS

Nurcholish Madjid, also known as 'Cak Nur', was born in the eastern Javanese district of Jombang, the epicentre of the Indonesian *pesantren* world,¹ which was also the home of many other prominent Muslim leaders and intellectuals including Abdurrahman Wahid ('Gus Dur'), the widely respected and influential head of Indonesia's traditionalist Muslim mass organization Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) (1984–99), the not so successful fourth president of the Republic of Indonesia (1999–2001).² In fact, as the two epigones of Muslim intellectualism and activism in late twentieth-century Indonesia, Cak Nur and Gus Dur further cemented the ties between their respective families already established through the close friendship between their fathers. But whereas Wahid, as the grandson of the NU founder Hasjim Asj'ari and son of the former Minister of Religious Affairs Wahid Hasjim, firmly belonged to Java's Islamic aristocracy, Madjid's family, by contrast, found itself in a more marginal or liminal position on the interstices of existing social groupings.

Although living in the NU heartland and maintaining close relations with its leadership, Madjid's father married into a Sarekat Islam family and ran a reformist Islamic school. When, after the NU's split from Indonesia's main Islamic Masyumi Party, he continued to support the latter while simultaneously trying to remain loyal to NU authority figures, the family was eventually ostracized by both the traditionalist and modernist camps. Having completed a combined secular and Islamic religious education, Madjid left the district to attend the progressive Pondok Pesantren Modern Gontor in Ponogoro, in order to escape the social isolation his family was facing at home.

With such a solid educational background Madjid qualified for admission to one of the main secular state universities. However, he opted instead

¹ *Pesantren* (Javanese) or *pondok* (Malay): traditional Islamic boarding-school found throughout Muslim South-East Asia.

² For more detailed information see Greg Barton, *Abdurrahman Wahid: Muslim Democrat, Indonesian President*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002, pp. 67–72, 120–1.

for Jakarta's Islamic State Institute (IAIN) Syarif Hidayatullah, where he chose not to specialize in one of the traditional Islamic sciences, but to enrol in the department of Arabic literature and Islamic culture at the faculty of cultural studies. He also became active in student politics, and in 1967 was elected chairman of Indonesia's Association of Muslim Students (Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam, HMI); he was the first IAIN student to hold this office, and also the first to be elected for two consecutive terms. As the incumbent of a such prominent political office, and because of his family's connections with the Masyumi Party, he was quickly anointed the political heir of its leader, Muhammad Natsir, and even nicknamed Natsir Muda ('Young Natsir'). As the head of the Union of South-East Asian Islamic Students and co-founder of the International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations he also built up an international network and profile, while his intellectual maturing was further enhanced by study tours in America and the Middle East. It was not long before he caused a major uproar by revealing his true views on the role of religion in politics.

FROM ISLAMIC STATE TO VICEGERENCY OF HUMANKIND

The political controversy Nurcholish Madjid became embroiled in centred around what have been referred to as his two 'paradigmatic speeches'.³ The first, 'The Necessity of Renewing Islamic Thought and the Problem of the Integration of the Ummat', given on 3 January 1970 in what Madjid had assumed to be a closed seminar, caused a furore when the text was leaked.⁴ On this occasion Madjid launched his provocative slogan 'Islam, yes! Islamic party, no!'⁵ Such words from the HMI chairman and prospective successor of Natsir shocked the Masyumi establishment. Evidently no longer sharing the party's ambition to establish an Islamic state in Indonesia, and exchanging its adherents' excessively nostalgic orientation towards

³ Ann Kull, *Piety and Politics: Nurcholish Madjid and his Interpretation of Islam in Modern Indonesia*, Lund: Department of History and Anthropology of Religion, Lund University, 2005, p. 106.

⁴ Nurcholish Madjid, 'The Issue of Modernization Among Muslims in Indonesia: From a Participant's Point of View', in Gloria Davis (ed.), *What is Indonesian Culture?*, Athens: Center for International Studies, Ohio University, 1979, 143–55, p. 145.

⁵ Nurcholish Madjid, *Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam*, Jakarta: Islamic Research Centre, 1970, p. 2.

the past for a forward-looking attitude, Madjid effectively parted ways with the co-called 'classical modernists' with their conflation of state and religion. Doubting that organizations associated with the old Masyumi leadership, such as the Muhammadiyah, would put their weight behind his radically different renewal process (the NU only embraced it reluctantly), Madjid insisted that the envisaged reformation required a different 'liberal group of renovators', unhindered by traditionalist, sectarian or ideological constraints, to lead Indonesian Muslims forward under the New Order regime which had replaced the Sukarno government in the late 1960s.⁶

Nurcholish Madjid's ideas gelled much better with those promoted by another, older and more senior Muslim scholar and educationist, Mukti Ali, than with the classical modernists and traditionalists. Educated in Pakistan and Canada, this IAIN professor had been grooming a circle of young intellectuals, including technocrats, known as the 'limited group', at his home in Yogyakarta. In their view, the Qur'an and *sunna* do not provide any clear-cut evidence for the obligation to establish an Islamic state. While accepting that Islam recognizes certain socio-political principles they were careful not to ideologize them. They considered that if Islamic values are to be timeless and universal, they must be understood in a dynamic way, which mean they must be subjected to constant critical examination, revision, and transformation.⁷ When Mukti Ali became Minister of Religious Affairs in 1971 he incorporated these ideas into a new religious education policy geared towards involving all religious groups in the New Order development policy. The regime, in turn, opened up space for new opportunities in public life for those Muslim intellectuals and technocrats who were not pursuing overtly Islamist political agendas.⁸

⁶ Ibid., pp. 9–10.

⁷ Bahtiar Effendy, *Islam and the State in Indonesia*, Singapore: Institute for South East Asian Studies, 2003, p. 70.

⁸ Robert W. Hefner, 'Islamization and Democratization in Indonesia', in Robert W. Hefner and Patricia Horvath (eds), *Islam in an Era of Nation-States: Political and Religious Renewal in Muslim Southeast Asia*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997, p. 79; Fauzan Saleh, *Modern Trends in Islamic Theological Discourse in Twentieth Century Indonesia: A Critical Survey*, Leiden, Boston and Cologne: Brill, 2001, p. 240. In a detailed study Federspiel estimates this cohort at 100–200 individuals, seventeen of whom he assesses as influential and representative. His survey also includes Madjid as the only IAIN academic: see Howard Federspiel, *Muslim Intellectuals and National Development in Indonesia*, Commack, NY: Nova Science Publications, 1992, p. 5. In regard to 'new opportunity spaces', Hakan Yavuz discusses this

After his first speech in 1970 Madjid seems to have thought long and hard about the received criticism. In fact it was two years before he responded fully by elaborating his position in another address, entitled 'Reinvigorating Religious Understanding in the Indonesian Muslim Community'. Taking his cue from Harvey Cox, he carefully distinguished between secularization, as the separation of transcendental from temporal values, and secularism, as 'the name for an ideology, a new closed world view which functions very much like a new religion'.⁹ Madjid's critics, however, dismissed this differentiation as 'sophistry'.¹⁰ In fact, it was exactly the use of this kind of 'Western' terminology that antagonized many of the other Muslim intellectuals, who rejected it as misrepresentation of the political realities in the Muslim world.

In a clever inversion of their challenging of his advocacy of secularization, Madjid retorted that the sacralization of an Islamic state by his detractors was itself a 'distortion of the proper relationship between state and religion'.¹¹ Safeguarding the integrity of Islam's core tenet of *tawhid*, or the belief in the One God as absolutely transcendent, imposes an inescapable need for desacralizing this-worldly existence, divesting it of all divine connotations, because failing to do so would constitute a violation of the very notion of *tawhid*. One consequence of his opponents' conflation of the political and religious was a propensity towards what Madjid called '*fiqhism*'—a formalist understanding of 'Islam as a structure and collection of laws' at the expense of its more substantive spiritual veracities.¹² His criticism of their other preoccupation, their insistence on imposing an Islamic state, was based on their misapprehension of the caliphate. Madjid's view of the caliphate as a historical contingency rather than a religious imperative was very much in line with that of other earlier critics of Islamic statehood such as 'Ali 'Abd al-Raziq.

in regards to the situation in Turkey in the 1950s and 1960s: Hakan Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, Oxford University Press, 2003.

⁹ Madjid, *Pembaharuan*, p. 4.

¹⁰ Robert W. Hefner, 'Secularization and Citizenship in Muslim Indonesia', in Paul Heelas, David Martin and Paul Morris (eds), *Religion, Modernity and Postmodernity*, Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998, p. 159.

¹¹ Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam Kemodernan dan Keindonesiaan*, Bandung: Mizan, 1987, p. 255; Nurcholish Madjid, *The True Face of Islam: Essays on Islam and Modernity in Indonesia*, Jakarta: Voice Centre, 2003, p. 336.

¹² Madjid, *Islam Kemodernan*, p. 256; Madjid, *The True Face of Islam*, p. 336.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

Nurcholish Madjid maintained that secularization must be understood as a process of temporalizing (Madjid used the Indonesianized Arabic term *menduniawikan*) the values pertaining to humankind's this-worldly existence in contrast to the enduring transcendental values governing the after-life. Such an understanding allowed for a generic and abstract—and in his view more appropriate—reinterpretation of the notion of *khilafa*. This reading, separating temporal-secular values from eternal and universal values, will enable humankind as a whole to appropriately act out its assigned role as *khalifat Allah fi'l-ard*—that is, 'God's vicegerent on earth'.¹³ Unlike the political institution of the caliphate, this injunction is grounded in the Qur'an itself. By divorcing this Qur'anic notion of 'vicegerent of God' (*khalifat Allah*) from the historical manifestation of the political institution of the caliph as the 'successor of the Prophet of God' (*khalifat rasul Allah*), Madjid placed himself in the intellectual genealogy of liberal Muslim modernists whose inclusivist understanding of such stewardship as extending to the whole of humankind can be traced to figures such as Muhammad 'Abduh and Muhammad Iqbal. They were in turn inspired by the writings of the medieval mystic and theosophist Muhyi al-Din ibn al-'Arabi.¹⁴

POLITICAL THEORY, THEOLOGY, AND EPISTEMOLOGY

In his conceptualization of secularity Nurcholish Madjid elaborated on the relationship between political institutions, structures, and religion. At the same time he gave considerable attention to the connections between political theorizing, theology, and epistemology. His point of departure is the distinction between humankind's 'transcendental life' (*kehidupan uchrawi*), which is represented on a vertical axis connecting individual human beings to God, and the horizontal relations maintained with nature and fellow human beings in this-worldly existence (*kehidupan duniawi*). Even though these two dimensions merge together in individual lives, as two distinct aspects of human life, they require different epistemological approaches.¹⁵ The eschatological law (*hukum uchrawi*) governing the vertical spiritual

¹³ Madjid, *Pembaharuan*, p. 5; Madjid, *The True Face of Islam*, pp. 317 and 327.

¹⁴ Jaafar Sheikh Idris, 'Is Man the Vicegerent of God?', *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 1 (1990), 99–110, p. 106; Francis Robinson, 'Other-Worldly and This-Worldly Islam and the Islamic Revival', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, series 3, 14, 1 (2004), 47–58, p. 54.

¹⁵ Madjid, *Islam Kemodernan*, pp. 245–8.

dimension of humankind's relation to God cannot be fully comprehended by means of conventional rational and empirical methods developed through the human faculty of reason, whereas the horizontal domain of temporal matters or the realm of the secular (*duniawi*) is inaccessible to the spiritual methods drawing on revealed knowledge.¹⁶

Madjid further articulated the connection between theology and epistemology by again taking recourse to the core Islamic doctrinal concept of *tawhid*. In contrast to the spiritual dimension, which is intuitive and directed inward, dealings with the horizontal dimension of human life demand a certain degree of openness to the world, because the very limitations of our mental faculties force humans to rely on and cooperate with each other. Moreover, if the absolutely transcendent were not beyond this-worldly (rational) human comprehension, but could be brought into the realm of human understanding (that is, relative knowledge), that would imply that God can be relativized, and that would violate the notion of *tawhid*.¹⁷

Madjid had already touched on this particular point in an earlier essay published under the title 'Modernization is Rationalization not Westernization'. Written just before his first visit to America in 1968, it advocated embracing a rational methodology to modernize Indonesian society. At the same time, however, it cautioned against the temptations to embrace any of the West's secularist ideologies, whether humanism in a generic sense or one of its specific manifestations, such as rationalism, liberalism, or communism.¹⁸ To underscore the crucial contrast between Marxism's absolutized dialectical materialist world-view and Islam's acceptance of a transcendent God as the basis of all being, while at the same time acknowledging the shared positions regarding social justice and equality, Madjid deliberately invoked the Indo-Pakistani poet and philosopher Muhammad Iqbal's characterization of Islam as 'Bolshevism plus God'.¹⁹

This epistemological theory reflects what Rahardjo has called Madjid's 'radical monotheism'.²⁰ Madjid's response to revelation is also bound up with his theological view of humankind's relationship with God, in which

¹⁶ Nurcholish Madjid, 'Sekali Lagi Tentang Sekularisasi', in Muhammad Rasjidi, *Koreksi Terhadap Drs. Nurcholish Madjid Tentang Sekularisasi*, Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1972, pp. 40–42.

¹⁷ Madjid, *Islam Kemodernan*, pp. 242–3.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 181–90.

¹⁹ Madjid, *Pembaharuan*, p. 6; Madjid, *The True Face of Islam*, p. 318.

²⁰ M. Dawam Rahardjo, 'Islam dan Modernisasi: Catatan atas Paham Sekularisasi Nurcholish Madjid', in Madjid, *Islam Kemodernan*, p. 22.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

he attached central importance to the concept of *taqwa* or 'God-consciousness', or the sense of Rudolf Otto's concept of 'the numinous' in which faith or belief in God (*iman*) is grounded. Faith is considered to be an outcome of *fitra*, a disposition intrinsic to the inclination shared by all humankind towards God as Ultimate Truth. Within the Muslim context, the expression of this innate ability through *taqwa* is prefigured in the 'primordial monotheist' or *hanif*, predating the emergence of historical Islam.²¹ If the vertical dimension is characterized by spiritual congruence based on faith, the coherence of human life in its horizontal aspects is brought into material congruence through knowledge (*ilm*), which humankind is capable of acquiring through the faculty of reason.²² Converging in each individual life, the vertical and horizontal dimensions define our ethos as human beings, and the 'tangible form of this high moral character' is expressed through the 'virtuous deeds' (*'amal salih*) by which a harmonious lifeworld respectful of both the surrounding environment and interpersonal relations is maintained, and through which humankind lives out its role as God's vicegerent on earth.²³

Madjid's consistent adherence to his conviction that knowledge achieved through the use of human reason is always relative and that ultimate truth is only accessible through revelation was also maintained in his later thinking, even though on later occasions he expressed regret at having used such terms as secularization and desacralization, which were considered provocative and controversial by many fellow Muslims. With the benefit of hindsight he admitted having underestimated the difficulties in making the distinction between secularization and secularism understandable to his audience, and that he should have opted for a 'more correct and neutral terminology' and a different tactic in presenting his views: 'If I were able to go back in time, I would follow my previous method, i.e., *pénétration pacifique*, the "smuggling method" of introducing new ideas'.²⁴

CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES

In spite of his second thoughts about his manner of expression, what did not change was Madjid's self-perception of working within the boundaries

²¹ Madjid, *Pembaharuan*, p. 8; Madjid, *Islam Kemodernan*, p. 242.

²² Madjid, *Islam Kemodernan*, pp. 246–8.

²³ Ibid., p. 244; Madjid, *The True Face of Islam*, p. 327.

²⁴ Madjid, *Islam Kemodernan*, p. 167; Madjid, 'The Issue of Modernization', p. 152.

of acceptable Islamic beliefs and practices. This was evinced by his choice to refer to his reform agenda as a 'renewal of Islamic thinking' (*pembaruan pemikiran Islam*). With this he was appealing to a notion that can be traced to the Traditions of the Prophet, where it is announced that authentic Islamic learning will be revitalized at the regular interval of every century of the Islamic calendar by the so-called Renewer (*mujaddid*). In this way the associated notion of renewal (*tajdid*), emphatically distinguished from innovation (*bid'a*), became firmly situated within traditional scholarship and gained legitimacy. Some of his detractors, however, still thought otherwise, with leading scholars such as Mohammed Rasjidi and Hamka even calling into question Madjid's scholarly credentials.²⁵ Some suggested the education system of Pondok Gontor was to be blamed for his perceived transgressions, and they even demanded that Muhammad Natsir address the issue with its administrators.²⁶

The ensuing polemics have been extensively discussed in the secondary literature, and one of the key commentators on the episode, the Malaysian academic Muhammad Kamal Hassan, decidedly took sides with Madjid's opponents as he accused him and other *pembaruan* thinkers of 'irreverent attitudes, inept religious formulations, pretentiousness and defiant adolescent temper', calling Madjid himself the 'umma's *enfant terrible*' and dismissing his 'accommodationist response' to the political situation created by the New Order regime.²⁷

Aside from these political considerations, it was also Madjid's reliance on Christian theologians, such as Harvey Cox, and Western sociologists of religion such as Robert Bellah (with the shadows of Weber and Durkheim looming in the background) that provoked the sharpest reactions. Never disavowing the significance of life's vertical dimension and clearly maintaining a claim to personal piety and commitment as a faithful Muslim, Madjid can be said to foreshadow the reversal in the initial positions of some of these Western proponents of the secularization-modernization thesis and the way they have reinterpreted the religion factor, leading to a reconsideration of secularization along 'softer' lines and recognition of the salience of religion in the contemporary world in the recent literature on the subject.²⁸

²⁵ Muhammad Kamal Hassan, *Muslim Intellectual Responses to 'New Order' in Indonesia*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1980, pp. 122, 126, 139.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

²⁸ Peter L. Berger, Grace Davie and Effie Fokas, *Religious America, Secular Europe? A*

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

Invoking the names of other Western scholars such as Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Karl Barth, and Louis Gardet, Madjid's main detractor, Mohammed Rasjidi, contrasted this 'newfangled Islam which conformed to the Christian missionaries' conception of true religion' with the—in his view—more genuine purification attempts of Muslim *mujaddidun* or 'renewers' of earlier generations.²⁹ Even if the association with Christian theologians was not entirely off the mark, Rasjidi's deliberate and explicit use of the Arabic term for renewal, instead of the Indonesian *pembaruan*, was obviously intended to detract from Madjid's own claim of engaging in the accepted practice of renewing authentic Islamic beliefs, and was clearly meant to insinuate *bid'a*, or unlawful innovation, on the part of the young Madjid.

REVISITING SECULARIZATION

A couple of years later Madjid produced two codas which are also valuable for the further assessment of the heuristic underpinnings of his argument in favour of the compatibility of the secularization process with Islam and, consequently, against the need for an Islamic state or restoration of the historical caliphate.

Emulating Cox's search for biblical sources to back up his argumentation in favour of secularization, in 'A Few Notes on the Issue of the Renewal of Thought in Islam', Madjid appealed to the same Qur'anic verse as his opponents to support his claim that although 'secularism does not match with religion, especially with Islam', the latter is not adverse to the secularization process.³⁰ The other afterthought, 'Secularisation Reconsidered', was not written until after Madjid's return from a long sojourn in Chicago (1976–84), where he had been pursuing a doctorate in Islamic studies under the exiled Pakistani scholar Fazlur Rahman. This latest meditation on the topic evinces a further sophistication in his thinking.

Theme and Variations, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008; Paul Heelas, Scott Lash and Paul Morris (eds), *Detraditionalization: Critical Reflections on Authority and Identity*, Cambridge, MA and Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996.

²⁹ Hassan, *Muslim Intellectual Responses*, pp. 122–3.

³⁰ Madjid, *Islam Kemodernan*, pp. 257–8. The verse in question is 45: 24: "They say, "There is only our life in this world: we die, we live, nothing but time destroys us." They have no knowledge of this; they only follow guesswork. Their only argument' (Muhammad A.S. Abdel Haleem, *The Quran: A New Translation*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 325).

The main concern of this text was to underscore the importance of complementing the analysis of secularization in political terms with a sociological understanding drawn from Robert Bellah's essay 'Islamic Tradition and the Problems of Modernization'.³¹ Contrasting two heuristic ideal types—an enchanted cosmic continuum, resulting from a 'dreaming innocence', and its opposite, 'perhaps closely approximated in Harvey Cox's *Secular City*', where myth, magic, and ritual have disappeared—Bellah argues that the social infrastructure of pre-Islamic Arabia could not sustain the structural elements of Islam.³² The absolute transcendence of God, the appeal to individual responsibility, and the 'radical devaluation, one might legitimately say secularisation, of all existing social structures in the face of this central man-God relationship' were simply too modern for the early Muslims to cope with.³³ This apparently uncritical agreement with Bellah's essentialist account of Islamic history is all the more surprising not just because his anachronistic interpretation suffers from the same oversimplifications for which Madjid had taken the classical Islamic modernists to task in his earlier writings, but also because it is in stark contrast to Madjid's own growing appreciation of the importance of recognizing the historicity of Islam, following his introduction to historical investigations of another renowned Chicago Islamicist, Marshall Hodgson.

In the context of the present examination, Madjid's reliance on Bellah's essay is nevertheless significant for other reasons. Identifying a growing disparity between the envisaged ideal Muslim community and the political realities of Islamic history, Bellah highlighted the failure to develop a sense of what we would now call citizenship. Moreover, with regard to the application of Islamic law Bellah argued that its formulation was defined more by post-Qur'anic practice than by injunctions found in the Scripture itself.³⁴ Bellah's exposé supported Madjid's long-held reservations regarding the historical caliphate and the case he had consistently made against the need for founding an Islamic state. As a kind of correction of his own initial reductionist account, towards the end of his meditation Bellah noted that a 'perfectly reasonable religion and a perfectly rational man would conform

³¹ Robert Bellah, *Beyond Belief: Essays on Religion in a Post-Traditional World*, New York: Harper & Row, 1976.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 147.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 152–4.

to the ideal type of the secular city'.³⁵ This dovetails nicely with Madjid's frequent evocation of the 'Covenant of Medina' (*mithaq madina*) not as a blueprint for Islamic statehood, but as a moral compass providing guidance to Muslims living in the pluralist world of today. Moreover, Bellah recognized that 'man is not only a secular-critical being, but also a mythical, non-rational being', even to the extent that, in order to make sense of the whole, humankind has actually given 'a certain psychological priority' to this mythical thought. All this resonated strongly with Madjid's earlier exposition on the respective rational and spiritual dimensions of human existence.³⁶

Since Cox and Bellah's understanding of secularization is very much informed by the work of Weber, Durkheim, and Parsons, some commentators have qualified Madjid's thought as functionalist.³⁷ However, that would fall short of accounting for his theological concerns. In this regard, it is suggested that Madjid's attitude towards modernization and secularization was actually closer to Peter Berger's position than to that of either Bellah or Cox. For example, Madjid's advocacy of the temporalization of this-worldly values is comparable to Berger's social engineering by means of new 'plausibility structures' which take into account the advances in human knowledge. Their theorizing on secularization arises from very similar epistemological assumptions. Both share a progressive or evolutionary understanding of knowledge. In Madjid's case this becomes clear when reading his pleas for secularization in conjunction with the 1968 essay on the undeniable and inescapable compatibility of Islam with progressive rationalization. His distinction between the collective-horizontal and individual-vertical dimensions of human life has its parallel in Berger's explication of a 'duplication of consciousness' resulting from the confrontation in human experience between the socialized and non-socialized components of self. As long as these components continue to engage in conversation with each other, the social world will remain 'an open area in which the individual expands his being in meaningful activity'. But when this dialectic is lost to human consciousness, the ensuing process of alienation will turn the social

³⁵ Ibid., p. 165.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Syamsul Bakri and Mudhofir, *Jombang Kairo, Jombang Chicago: Sintesis Pemikiran Gus Dur dan Madjid dalam Pembaruan Islam di Indonesia*, Solo: Tiga Serangkai, 2004, pp. 103ff., 136; Rahardjo, 'Islam dan Modernisasi', pp. 22–6.

world into a 'closed aggregate of reifications'.³⁸ Extended to include political institutions and structures developed under particular historical conditions, it provides a convincing argument for rejecting the allegedly inescapable necessity to restore the caliphate.

A comparison between Berger's theological writings and Madjid's caution against embracing Western ideologies, such as humanism and secularism, shows that the similarities run even deeper.³⁹ Inspired by Karl Barth, Berger initially advocated a separation of the transcendent from this-worldly existence, and used the Swiss theologian to support his contention that by 'denuding the cosmos of its divinity and placing God totally beyond its confines, the biblical tradition prepared the way for the process we now call secularization'.⁴⁰

Calling on Americans to face up to modernity and its desacralizing logic, he challenged the 'bad faith'⁴¹ inherent in the ways churches tried to carve out social roles for themselves in Western society. Instead, he invited people to 'face honestly the immense precariousness of our existence'.⁴² According to Berger, using religion to sanctify the imposition of law and order on this worldly existence was nothing short of blasphemy, and it would be preferable to heed Bonhoeffer's advice and 'welcome secularization as an expression of the maturity and liberty of modern man'.⁴³ The Islamists' stubborn insistence on an Islamic state, and their refusal to desacralize politics and relegate it to its proper place in the realm of the secular, are condemned by Madjid as an equally sacrilegious violation of the doctrine of *tawhid* and a manifestation of the same 'bad faith' of which Berger had accused the Christian churches.

Obviously Berger's historical description of the secularization process was based on data from Western societies, but Madjid's examination of the same phenomenon in the context of the Muslim world echoes the same key points. Both advocated the shrinking of the scope of the sacred and emphasized the radical transcendence of the Divine. The concomitant vertical

³⁸ Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religions*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967, p. 86.

³⁹ Madjid, *Islam Kemodernan*, pp. 185–6.

⁴⁰ Peter L. Berger, *The Precarious Vision: A Sociologist Looks at Social Fictions and the Christian Faith*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1961, p. 177.

⁴¹ Inspired by Sartre's *mauvaise foi*, *ibid.*, p. 89.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 150.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

polarization between God and man, with a thoroughly 'demythologized' universe interposed between them, turned the historicized world into a field of activity for 'highly individuated man'.⁴⁴ After dropping his Barthian guise, Berger developed a theological position comparable to Madjid's attitude towards *iman* and *fitra*. His choice of Schleiermacher's inductive investigation of religious experience as an alternative for Barth's deductionism—which denied the experience of God as an 'anthropologically given quality' and affirmed tradition instead—as well as Rudolf Bultmann's reductionist modernization mirrors how Madjid's renewal or *pembaruan* thinking navigated away from Masyumi's conflation of state and religion while at the same time steering clear of naked secularism.⁴⁵

AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL HERMENEUTICS FOR ISLAM

After his postgraduate studies at the University of Chicago Madjid returned to Indonesia with a more substantive and better-informed appreciation of the Islamic heritage, which he used to develop a human-centred hermeneutics. The philosophical foundation for this intellectual project is laid out in a lengthy introduction to what can be regarded as Madjid's key publication: *Islam: Doctrine and Civilization: A Critical Analysis of the Problem of Faith, Humanity and Modernity*. Written during a year as visiting professor at McGill University in 1992, it provides an inventory of Madjid's intellectual concerns during the later part of his career gravitating around a substantialist understanding of Islam in which notions such as humanity, humanism, and humanitarianism (caught in the Indonesian term *kemanusiaan*), civilization (*peradaban*) and pluralism (*kemajemukan*) replace the earlier epistemological and political preoccupations informing the rationalization and secularization agenda of his earlier career. Bringing together issues of belief and epistemological and ethical concerns, it reflects the three Kantian questions to which all philosophical thinking can be reduced. Whereas the anthropological outlook has taken centre stage, Madjid has nevertheless managed to integrate his persistent concern for different epistemes: for example, where he used the Qur'anic imagery of humankind's simultaneous relations with the Transcendent through the 'Rope of God' (*habl Allah*) and

⁴⁴ Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*, pp. 11–17.

⁴⁵ Peter L. Berger, *The Heretical Imperative: Contemporary Possibilities of Religious Affirmation*, London: Collins, 1980, pp. 76ff.

this world through the 'Rope of Mankind' (*habl al-nas*) to illustrate how the vertical and horizontal dimensions of human existence are governed by different epistemological methods.⁴⁶

In a meditation contrasting Islam's universal aspirations with the Muslim world's cultural diversity, Madjid traced the origin of Islamic universalism in its generic sense to the earlier mentioned notion of *fitra*.⁴⁷ Finding its first concrete manifestation in the history of prophethood, in the figure of Abraham and his attitude of total surrender to God or *al-Islam*, Madjid nevertheless rejected as anachronistic any immediate equation of this early prophetic activity with the historicized religious traditions of Judaism and Christianity. Even when he insisted that Islam found its concrete 'historical, sociological, and theological expression in the mission of Muhammad who introduced *al-islām par excellence*' and made it 'relevant to any time and any place', Madjid willingly admitted that Islam's external manifestations would vary in accordance with changing historical and cultural circumstances—as evinced by the history of prophethood, which had seen apostles sent to 'every nation and community ... using different languages'.⁴⁸

This move from the universal to the particular, or—in epistemological terms—from general to specific, introduced again an explicitly anthropological dimension into the definition of the relationship between religion and culture. This was further elaborated in other writings under the aspect of his understanding of religion and culture as different but not separated.⁴⁹ Whereas religion has universal and absolute pretensions in its dealings with the realm of the transcendent, culture as the province of human thinking will always be particular and relative. As a continuation of the universal teaching addressing all mankind, the historical religious tradition introduced by Muhammad is expressed through a form of a cosmopolitan Islamic humanism with both inward and outward vectors. Unlike other progressive and provocative Muslim thinkers emerging in the late twentieth century, and notwithstanding the earlier mentioned attempt at a compre-

⁴⁶ An image taken from 3:103. Cf. Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam Doktrin dan Peradaban: Sebuah Telaah Kritis tentang Masalah Keimanan, Kemanusiaan, dan Kemodernan*, Jakarta: Paramadina, 2005, pp. 130 and xiii–xv.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 425–48, for the English translation see Madjid, *The True Face of Islam*, pp. 113–29.

⁴⁸ Madjid, *The True Face of Islam*, pp. 122–3.

⁴⁹ Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam Agama Kemanusiaan: Membangun tradisi dan Visi Baru Islam Indonesia*, Jakarta: Paramadina 2003, p. 36.

hensive treatment of the philosophical questions that occupied him, Madjid's concerns remained pragmatic.

This practical interest can even be discerned in his more theoretical reflections on the anthropological concepts found in the Qur'an. According to Madjid, this had not received much attention in traditional Islamic scholarship, not because earlier generations of *'ulama* deemed human existence and behaviour unimportant, but because 'in the world of classical Islamic thinking the issue was addressed in a dispersed way, such as in sciences associated with Sufism, without being made an explicit and separate subject of investigation'.⁵⁰ However, one anthropological concept that can be teased out from the Qur'an is—as already noted in his earlier writings—humankind's vicegerency of the earth, or *kekhalifahan manusia*, as well as the ethical and epistemological implications associated with that task.⁵¹ Aside from imposing a sense of responsibility as the starting-point of morality, this earthly stewardship also implies that human existence is situated in a spatio-temporal realm. This makes knowledge and understanding of the physical environment necessary, which can then be historicized as a move from mythology towards scientific and technological knowledge.⁵² But at no point it is suggested that this forces a specific form of government onto Muslim societies. When the concept of governance (*hukum*) is discussed in the Qur'an, the only historical political institution mentioned and held up as a paradigm is the so-called 'Covenant of Medina' charter (*Shahifat Madinah; Piagam Madinah*). In his writings Madjid frequently referred to this document to demonstrate the recognition of a pluralist society by Muhammad and the early Muslim community.

Madjid's abiding concern for safeguarding cultural diversity through a non-formalist understanding of Islam as a universal teaching addressing the whole of humankind is further illustrated by the space, time and energy he devoted to discussing the cultural particularities of Indonesian Islam.⁵³ This contextualization of Islam as a living religious tradition in Indonesian cul-

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 300.

⁵¹ Cf. also Madjid's inaugural lecture on the occasion of his appointment to full professor, entitled 'Man's Vicegerency and the Reformation of the World', in which he 'tried to systematize the concept of an Islamic anthropology': Zamharir, Muhammad Hari, *Agama dan Negara: Analisis Kritik Pemikiran Politik Nurcholish Madjid*, Jakarta: Murai Kencana, 2004, p. 103.

⁵² Madjid, *Islam Agama Kemanusiaan*, pp. 302–4.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 362.

ture had already been evident in the first collection of Madjid's essays released in 1987 under the title *Islam Kemodernan dan Keindonesiaan*. Linking religion and culture also connects his epistemology with a humanist ethics, and forms the basis for the conjecture that, while it had successfully avoided the establishment of an Islamic state, 'being the most populous among Muslim nations, Indonesia could offer itself as the laboratory for developing modern religious tolerance and pluralism'.⁵⁴

DISSEMINATION AND LEGACY

The main vehicle used by Madjid for the dissemination of his ideas was the Paramadina Foundation, which he established in 1986. Even though there are different interpretations given to explain the foundation's name, it can certainly also be read as an explicit reference to the Covenant of Medina, the only concrete Islamic political institution consistently invoked by Madjid and predating the emergence of the historical caliphate.⁵⁵ Part think tank, part publishing house, and part educational institution, Paramadina was used to cultivate the upwardly mobile professionals and technocrats dominating the state bureaucracy into what is sometimes referred to the 'new *santri*'—pious, well-educated middle- and upper-class Muslims. For this last purpose a special unit called the Klub Kajian Agama (KKA) or 'Religious Study Group' was set up within the foundation's structure.⁵⁶ The programmes run by Paramadina emphasized a pluralist, substantialist, contextualized understanding of Islam which came to be known as cultural, civil, or cosmopolitan Islam.

Because Paramadina steered clear of Islamic political ideologies the New Order regime allowed initiatives such as Madjid's enough space to be able to reach increasingly influential and affluent Muslim city-dwellers. As Indonesian Muslim society became unmistakably more pious, those close to the power centres, and eventually even President Suharto and the top brass of

⁵⁴ Madjid, *The True Face of Islam*, p. 172.

⁵⁵ The organization itself gives two explanations for this name: presenting it as contractions of the Sanskrit expression *parama*, meaning 'giving priority' and *din*, the Arabic word for religion; or the Spanish *para* or 'pro' and *madina*, the Arabic word for 'city' or 'place of civilisation or polity', cf. <http://www.paramadina.or.id/tentang-kami>, accessed 7 April 2010.

⁵⁶ Robert W. Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000, pp. 119ff.

the military hierarchy around him, began establishing their own Islamic credentials.⁵⁷ Former Islamist politicians and activists too were allowed a more generous manoeuvring space, as long as they limited their activities to religious propagation and avoided politics.⁵⁸ This broad phenomenon of a more salient religiosity is referred to as the 'greening' (*penghijauan*) of Indonesian society—green being the symbolic colour of Islam.⁵⁹ With eight New Order cabinet members on the Paramadina advisory board, Madjid himself had moved very close to the centre of political power.

In response to his past detractors who had dismissed his ideas as *bid'a* or an example of youthful rashness, called into question his scholarly credentials, and accused him of an accommodationist attitude towards the New Order regime, other proponents of the ensuing concept of cultural Islam regarded Madjid as an initiator of a 'mutual symbiosis between the new generation of Muslim intellectuals and the New Order'.⁶⁰ Other supporters of Madjid countered the accusation of *bid'a* by pointing out that the latter 'did not relate innovation to *bid'a*, but to *tajdid*, to be achieved only through *ijtihad*' (Abdul Hadi 2006: 98).⁶¹ Some were even bolder: evoking the adage that every hundred years a scholar is recognized as that era's renewer, who will reinvigorate Islamic learning, they saw no reason why such a figure could not arise in Indonesia, even going as far as claiming that Madjid had all the characteristics of such a *mujaddid* or *seorang tokoh pembaru*.⁶²

⁵⁷ Taufik Abdullah, 'The Formation of a New Paradigm? A Sketch on Contemporary Islamic Discourse', in Mark R. Woodward (ed.), *Toward a New Paradigm: Recent Developments in Indonesian Islamic Thought*, Tempe: Arizona State University Program for Southeast Asian Studies, 1996, 53–63.

⁵⁸ Azyumardi Azra, 'Globalization of Indonesian Muslim Discourse: Contemporary Religio-Intellectual Connections between Indonesia and the Middle East', in Johan Meuleman (ed.), *Islam in the Era of Globalization: Muslim Attitudes towards Modernity and Identity*, London and New York: Routledge, 2002, 31–50, p. 36.

⁵⁹ Hefner, *Civil Islam*, p. 122.

⁶⁰ Fuad Jabali and Arief Subhan, 'A New Form of Contemporary Islam in Indonesia', in Rizal Sukma and Clara Joewono (eds), *Islamic Thought and Movements in Contemporary Indonesia*, Jakarta: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2007, p. 54.

⁶¹ W.N. Abdul Hadi 'Islam di Indonesia dan Transformasi Budaya' in Abdul Halim (ed.), *Menembus Batas Tradisi: Menuju Masa Depan yang Membebaskan: Refleksi atas Pemikiran Nurcholish Madjid*. Jakarta: Universitas Paramadina and Kompas 2006, p. 98.

⁶² Bakri and Mudhofir, *Jombang Kairo, Jombang Chicago*, p. 77.

Exponents of an upcoming generation of Muslim intellectuals, who have been rising to prominence in the course of the past decade and are generally found in think tanks and NGOs associated with the NU, take a more critical view of Nurcholish Madjid. Among them, Ahmad Baso is one of the most articulate voices. He alleges that Madjid did not go far enough in challenging the idealism of the Islamic tradition when depicting its own history, including the role of the caliphate. Tracing the lack of analytical rigour in Madjid's distinction between the universal validity of the basic tenets of the Islamic faith and the cultural particularity informing its historical unfolding to an essentialist understanding of terms such as Islam, modernity, Indonesianness and secularization—because of his reliance on thinkers and scholars such as Ibn Taymiyya, Marshall Hodgson, Robert Bellah, and Ernest Gellner—Baso argues that Madjid has actually helped sustain existing power structures grounded in the fictitious and mythical interpretations perpetuated by Bellah, Hodgson, and Madjid himself.⁶³

Baso charges that Madjid's invocation of the Constitution of Medina and the resulting glorification of Islam's earliest past blinded him to the 'subtleties of the classical history of Islam'. He suggests that a more careful reading of classical Muslim historiographers, such as al-Tabari, Ibn Hisham and al-Maqrizi, and use of the critical analytical apparatus for a more radical re-reading of Islamic history provided by fellow intellectuals such as Muhammad 'Abid al-Jabiri, Mohammed Arkoun and Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, would have enabled Madjid to discern that 'the earliest Muslim community was not always described as the ideal model'.⁶⁴ Consequently, Madjid ended up associating too closely with the powers-that-be and their hegemonic political tendencies. In that regard he should be considered as no different from those who display an uncritical and almost determinist acceptance of the historical caliphate as a necessity or an unavoidable outcome of the trajectory through which the formation of the Islamic tradition took shape.

Although Madjid was eventually instrumental in the removal of Suharto from power, he continued to oppose the imposition of Islamic law, let alone the establishment of an Islamic state in Indonesia. In the wake of the fall of the New Order regime and the post-1998 Reformasi era in which the army

⁶³ Ahmad Baso, 'Dari Kritik Wacana Agama Menuju Rationalisme', in Hairus Salim HS and Muhammad Ridwan (eds), *Kultur Hibrida: Anak Muda NU di Jalur Kultural*, Yogyakarta: LKiS 1999, pp. 37–8.

⁶⁴ Saleh, *Modern Trends in Islamic Theological Discourse*, p. 287.

had to loosen its grip on power, Islamist parties and activists returned to the country's political arena. In the ensuing antagonistic climate Nurcholish Madjid was exposed to new challenges to the extent that in the final year of his life he was left to face a *fatwa* issued by Indonesia's Council of Muslim Scholars (Majlis Ulama Indonesia) in which his political views and those of his liberal supporters were condemned.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Kull, *Piety and Politics*, pp. 196–7; Pierre Gillespie, 'Current Issues in Indonesian Islam: Analysing the Council of Indonesian Ulama Fatwa no. 7 Opposing Liberalism, Pluralism and Secularism', *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 1, 2 (2007), 202–40; Moch Nur Ichwan, 'Ulamā', State and Politics: Majelis Ulama Indonesia After Suharto', *Islamic Law and Society*, 12, 1 (2005), 45–72.

PROMOTING THE CALIPHATE ON CAMPUS
 DEBATES AND ADVOCACIES OF HIZBUT TAHRIR
 STUDENT ACTIVISTS IN INDONESIA

*Claudia Nef**

*'Fight against the System
 Unite People under Khilafah'*

Hizbut Tahrir sticker sold in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, in 2009 at the National Conference of Muslimah Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (MHTI)

In Indonesia Hizbut Tahrir has since 2000 become the organization that is most prominently demanding the establishment of a global caliphate (*khilafah*) under the implementation of the *shari'a*. Its Indonesian membership is estimated at a few hundred thousand.¹ Since the organization's ideology

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¹ B. Muhtadi, 'The Quest for Hizbut Tahrir in Indonesia', *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 37 (2009), 623–45, p. 624; M.N.M. Osman, 'Reviving the Caliphate in Malaysia', *Studies of Conflict and Terrorism*, 32 (2009), 646–63, p. 660. In my opin-

reached Indonesia in 1982 it has mainly found support among students and well-educated professionals in Indonesia's urban centres.² Their demand to fight against what they claim is the secular-capitalist-nationalist system is highly controversial, but both its membership numbers and the group of people supportive of its ideology continue to increase. In this chapter I seek to explore how Hizbut Tahrir student members frame their call for this particular mode of political governance by looking at contemporary debates, mobilization strategies, and advocacies taking place. I will focus on the organization's student activities in one particular locality, on the campus of the largest—and arguably one of the best—Indonesian universities, the Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, Central Java.

By drawing on almost two years of anthropological fieldwork conducted at this university on contemporary forms of Islamic student activism between 2005–6 and 2008–9, I seek to address the question of how Hizbut Tahrir members and sympathizers struggle to promote their vision of a different socio-political system. Inspired by Talal Asad's reflections on the concept of Islamic orthodoxy and reading Islam as a 'discursive tradition', I focus on how those calling for the caliphate relate to both the past and the future to try 'to regulate, uphold, require, or adjust *correct* practices, and to condemn, exclude, undermine or replace *incorrect* ones'.³ I mainly argue against seeing students as passive victims indoctrinated by a leading male elite of senior Hizbut Tahrir activists who indoctrinate them with the organization's ideology by using elaborate propaganda machinery and deceiving them with empty promises, as argued, for example, by Zeyno

ion the numbers given by Muhtadi and Osman seem to be rather high; neither reveals the sources on which this estimate is based. The organization itself is secretive about its membership. G. Fealy, 'Hizbut Tahrir in Indonesia: Seeking a "Total" Islamic Identity', in S. Akbarzadeh and F. Mansouri (eds), *Islam and Political Violence: Muslim Diaspora and Radicalism in the West*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2007, 151–64] p. 156, assumes a membership of at least several tens of thousands, based on the size of Hizbut Tahrir's rallies held in large Indonesian cities and the print runs of its various publications.

² Fealy, 'Hizbut Tahrir in Indonesia', p. 156; Muhtadi, 'The Quest for Hizbut Tahrir', p. 629; M.N.M. Osman, 'Reviving the Caliphate in the Nusantara: Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia's Mobilization Strategy and its Impact in Indonesia', *Working Paper S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies Singapore*, No. 171, 2009, p. 11.

³ T. Asad, *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam*, Washington: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 1986, p. 15.

Baran and Ariel Cohen.⁴ My aim is to show how students themselves actively engage in promoting the revival of the idea of the caliphate. Rather than assuming that Hizbut Tahrir activists are indoctrinated and passive, I seek to outline what level of agency they exercise and how resistance to concepts they perceive as un-Islamic and subordination to the organization's ideology are entangled in complex ways.

In the Indonesian context, the most insightful studies about Hizbut Tahrir were conducted by Fealy, Muhtadi, Osman, and Ward.⁵ The Australian political scientist Greg Fealy published the first study of the organization in 2007. It is based not only on literature research but also on interviews conducted with high-ranking members, such as Muhammad al-Khaththath, Ismail Yusanto, Ahmad Junaidi, and other senior members of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia.⁶ Fealy describes in detail the origins of Hizbut Tahrir in Indonesia in the early 1980s. In the 1970s Abdullah bin Nuh, the head of the al-Gazahli Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) in Bogor, was visiting his son who was studying in Australia and there met the young and charismatic Lebanese Hizbut Tahrir activist Abdurrahman al-Baghdadi, who had migrated to escape persecution. In 1982 Abdullah bin Nuh invited al-Baghdadi to his boarding-school in Bogor, where he started teaching. This school became a centre for the study of Hizbut Tahrir ideas, and in particular students from the Bogor Agricultural Institute joined the study circles (*halaqah*) and training programmes (*daurah*).⁷ According to Fealy, as well as Muhtadi, Osman and Ward, students were attracted to the study of Hizbut Tahrir concepts from the 1980s onward. They also note that Hizbut Tahrir tried to target student bodies for recruiting new members; however, these authors do not outline in detail how Hizbut Tahrir operated on different campuses and how the student activists themselves struggled to promote the organization's vision. Their studies are not based on empirical research

⁴ Z. Baran, *Hizb ut-Tahrir: Islam's Political Insurgency*, Washington: Nixon Center, 2004; Z. Baran, *The Challenge of Hizb ut-Tahrir: Deciphering and Combating Radical Islamic Ideology*, Conference Report, Nixon Center, Washington: Nixon Center, 2004; Z. Baran, 'Fighting the War of Ideas', *Foreign Affairs*, 84 (2005), 68–78; A. Cohen, *Hizb ut-Tahrir: An Emerging Threat to US Interests in Central Asia*, Heritage Foundation Backgrounder, 1656, 2003.

⁵ Fealy, 'Hizbut Tahrir in Indonesia'; Muhtadi, 'The Quest for Hizbut Tahrir'; Osman, 'Reviving the Caliphate in the Nusantara'; and K. Ward, 'Non-violent Extremists? Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 63 (2009), 149–64.

⁶ Fealy, 'Hizbut Tahrir in Indonesia', p. 215.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

conducted at universities, but rather focus on strategic considerations by the leading male elite of the organization to target students.

Examining how Hizbut Tahrir operates on campuses and analyzing how the students operate to promote the organization's concepts to make them appealing to their peers is not the core concern of the studies conducted by Muhtadi, Osman, and Ward. Rather, they focus on the question of how and in what aspects the organization influences the current political climate in the country. Muhtadi suggests, in his analysis based mainly on literature research, that the organization has influenced democratic consolidation in Indonesia in a negative way.⁸ He explains the success of Hizbut Tahrir in recent years mainly as a consequence of public dissatisfaction with the government since the fall of Suharto. Also Ward, basing his insights mostly on Hizbut Tahrir publications, sees the success of Hizbut Tahrir and the mode of political governance for which it is calling mainly as a profound critique of the status quo.⁹ Osman, like Fealy, bases his study on literature, but also on interviews with different high-ranking male members of the organization, rather than focusing on its grassroots activities in one particular location.¹⁰ Besides outlining the origins of the organization in Jerusalem as well as in Indonesia, Osman examines carefully the organization's different strategies and tactics to spread the idea of the caliphate in Indonesia. However, his rich and well-informed analysis is rather based on the leadership's general vision of how to work for the establishment of the caliphate than on the activities of low-ranking activists. He concludes that Hizbut Tahrir has indeed been successful in strengthening its influence and support, even though the organization is still small compared to other Islamic groups active in Indonesia. He thinks it is likely to keep growing in the coming years, especially as the current global financial crisis seems to support Hizbut Tahrir's claim that the capitalist system is unable to bring prosperity. He predicts that it will take several more years until it becomes a serious threat to the Indonesian state.¹¹ My study seeks to contribute to the growing scholarship about Hizbut Tahrir by focusing on its activities in one particular local setting.

⁸ Muhtadi, 'The Quest for Hizbut Tahrir'.

⁹ Ward, 'Non-violent Extremists?'.

¹⁰ Osman, 'Reviving the Caliphate in the Nusantara'.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

PROMOTING THE CALIPHATE ON CAMPUS

HIZBUT TAHRIR AT THE GADJAH MADA UNIVERSITY

From a structural point of view, Hizbut Tahrir at the Gadjah Mada University is a subdivision of Hizbut Tahrir's District Executive Committee (DPD: Dewan Perwakilan Daerah) of Yogyakarta. This District Committee is hierarchically subordinate to the Provincial Executive Committee (DPW: Dewan Pimpinan Wilayah), which is one division of the Central Executive Committee (DPP: Dewan Pimpinan Pusat) based in Jakarta. Via this structure, Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia is linked to the central leadership board of Hizbut Tahrir. Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia has a special branch for its female activists called Muslimah Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (MHTI), which has its own organizational structure mirroring that of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia. At the national level as well as at the grassroots level of the Gadjah Mada University, MHTI organizes various events exclusively for women. At the Gadjah Mada University at least, there are slightly more female than male activists.

The ideas of Hizbut Tahrir only reached Yogyakarta in late 1990.¹² In 1991 the first *halaqah* was founded, at which students of the Gadjah Mada University began studying the works of al-Nabhani in detail. Ismail Yusanto, the current spokesman of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia and an alumnus of the Gadjah Mada University, had brought these books to Yogyakarta from Bogor, where he had studied the ideas of Hizbut Tahrir.¹³ At that time Indonesian translations were already available. In the study circles the students used both the Arabic originals and the translations. Under the repressive Suharto government the meetings of the study circle were conducted secretly.¹⁴ A group of friends, all interested in studying the ideas of al-Nabhani about re-establishing a global caliphate, had rented a house

¹² The following account of the establishment of Hizbut Tahrir in Yogyakarta is based on personal communication with Dwi Condro and his wife in March 2009. During his studies at the Gadjah Mada University Dwi Condro was a member of the first study group established in Yogyakarta. At that time he was a high-ranking member of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia and a PhD student at the National University of Malaysia (UKM), writing his dissertation in the field of Islamic economics, on the *dinar*. He is furthermore an alumnus of the Islamic Student Association HMI-MPO.

¹³ For a detailed account of how the ideas of Hizbut Tahrir reached Bogor in 1982 see especially Fealy, 'Hizbut Tahrir in Indonesia', pp. 154–8 and Osman, 'Reviving the Caliphate in the Nusantara', pp. 3–7.

¹⁴ For a detailed overview about student activism during the Suharto regime see for example E. Aspinall, *Opposing Suharto: Compromise, Resistance, and Regime Change in Indonesia*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005, [chapter 5](#), pp. 116–44.

together, where Ismail Yusanto would come to teach. As female students were also interested in the ideas of Hizbut Tahrir, Ismail Yusanto also began classes for female students during his visits to Yogyakarta from 1993. These meetings took place in a mosque. A year later the first regular study circle for female students, which gathered on a weekly basis, was established.

It is difficult to say how many of the more than 55,000 students enrolled at the Gadjah Mada University are Hizbut Tahrir members, as the organization is secretive about this information. According to personal observation and hints from members, membership in 2010 may be a few hundred, probably between 100 and 200. Yet the number of students who are at least to some extent sympathetic to Hizbut Tahrir's ideas seems to be much higher. The difference between an official party member and a sympathizer is that before becoming a party member a sympathizer has to attend the weekly meetings of the *halaqah* and master at least three fundamental texts by al-Nabhani: *Nizam al-Islam* (The system of Islam), where the constitution for an Islamic state is outlined; *Mafahim Hizbut Tahrir* (Concepts of Hizbut Tahrir); and *al-Takattul al-hizbi* (Structuring the party).¹⁵ After showing visible changes in conduct and style of argumentation, and mastering the basic texts,¹⁶ the novice may be invited to become a party member. An oath of allegiance has to be taken, where the new member swears to be loyal to Islam and the ideology of Hizbut Tahrir and to obey its leadership.¹⁷

Hizbut Tahrir has in the years following 2006 become one of the most visible organizations on the campus of the Gadjah Mada University in terms of posters on information boards, the frequency of events both large and small, the eagerness of members to speak up in different thematic public seminars, and events held on the campus. Hizbut Tahrir activists often mention their organizational affiliation publicly and apply its ideology to different problems at hand, for example poverty, what they see as underdevelopment in the health care and education systems, and the moral degeneration of the Islamic community. Trying to convince others by discussion and argumentation, not by violence, of the truth of their ideology is seen as integral part of divine worship and of being a 'good Muslim'. They are eager to use new media technology and to benefit from an increasingly liberal political climate, such as freedom of speech and assembly. At the Gadjah

¹⁵ S. Taji-Farouki, *A Fundamental Quest: Hizb al-Tahrir and the Search for the Islamic Caliphate*, London: Grey Seal, 1996, p. 126.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 133.

¹⁷ See ibid., p. 134 for a detailed account of the oath.

PROMOTING THE CALIPHATE ON CAMPUS

Mada University, Hizbut Tahrir members have started, especially since the fall of Suharto in 1998, to hold important positions in the University Dakwah Organization, Jamaah Shalahuddin, linked to the Gadjah Mada University, and in the University's Student Council, as well as in other intra-campus and extra-campus organizations.¹⁸

The female Hizbut Tahrir activists can, at least at the Gadjah Mada University, be identified by their attire. Besides the headscarves extending over the torso, they wear long-sleeved, ankle-length dresses. The use of a one-piece dress makes the Hizbut Tahrir women distinguishable from *tarbiyah* activists inspired by the ideology of the Muslim Brothers, who also wear a veil extending over the torso, but combined with an ankle-length skirt and long blouse. Different colours are used, such as cream, shades of blue, green, pink, or yellow. It is my impression that the colours used by Hizbut Tahrir activists tend to be less muted and subtle than those used by *tarbiyah* activists. Also, the feet of Hizbut Tahrir activists are covered, with most activists wearing flesh-coloured socks. The headscarf usually matches the colour of the dress. The women do not seem to wear make-up on campus. It is uncommon to see a Hizbut Tahrir activist wearing a face veil, or even dark colours for both dress and headscarf. The male attire does not allow distinct identification, as it is similar to that of *tarbiyah* activists. In general, the male members grow beards and wear trousers above their ankles, commonly combined with a neatly ironed shirt. Both female and male activists often wear jackets embroidered with 'Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia', especially when riding their motorbikes. Also, they frequently decorate their motorbikes, helmets, or notebooks with different kinds of Hizbut Tahrir stickers.

DREAMING OF A BETTER WORLD: HIZBUT TAHRIR'S IDEOLOGY IN A NUTSHELL

On 28 October 2009 a few hundred Hizbut Tahrir student activists and sympathizers read out the students' pledge (*sumpah mahasiswa*) in Yogya-

¹⁸ An intra-campus organization is structurally linked to the university and either comes under the rector's office, such as Jamaah Shalahuddin, or, in the case of the Gadjah Mada University, comes under one of the eighteen faculties. The extra-campus organizations are not structurally linked to the university and do not usually receive either office space or funding. For an overview of the intra-campus organizations directly linked to the faculty see <http://www.ugm.ac.id/content.php?page=3&display=1>, accessed 13 October 2010.

karta, in front of the main entrance of the Gadjah Mada University, demanding the establishment of the caliphate.¹⁹ 28 October is the Day of the Youth Pledge (*Hari Sumpah Pemuda*), first declared in 1928, where young people pledge themselves to the Indonesian nation, homeland, and language.²⁰ However, the students' pledge taken by Hizbut Tahrir activists encompasses a different agenda, encompassed in five points, representing the core ideology of the organization in a nutshell:

1. With all our soul, we believe that secular systems, either capitalist democratic or socialist communist, are sources of people's deprivation and endanger the existence of Indonesia and other Muslims countries.
2. With all our heart, we believe that absolute sovereignty is reserved solely to Allah—the creator of the universe, humanity and life—to decide the future of Indonesia and other Muslim countries.
3. With all our soul, we will continue to relentlessly fight for the enactment of the sharia under the caliphate as the ultimate solution to the problems of Indonesia and other Muslims societies.
4. With our soul, we declare to all that our struggle is verbal and intellectual, and not violent.
5. With our soul, we declare that our struggle is not a consequence of historical demands, but is instead a consequence of deep faith in Allah.

The declaration of this pledge in Yogyakarta was only a follow-up event of the first Indonesian Islamic Student Congress (KMII: Kongres Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia), which had attracted over 5,000 students from different Indonesian cities.²¹ The congress was held in Jakarta on 18 October 2009. After speeches by prominent Hizbut Tahrir members, raising aware-

¹⁹ For a detailed description of the event in Yogyakarta see for example http://syabab.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=640:sumpah-pemuda-mahasiswa-muslim-di-berbagai-daerah-serentak-tolak-neoliberalisme-serukan-khilafah&Itemid=198, accessed 8 September 2010.

²⁰ For a detailed account on how the Youth Pledge developed over time in Indonesian history see K. Foulcher, 'Sumpah Pemuda: The Making and Meaning of a Symbol of Indonesian Nationhood', *Asian Studies Review*, 24 (2000), 376–410.

²¹ See for example http://syabab.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=658:18-oktober-2009-sejarah-baru-kebangkitan-pemuda-sumpah-mahasiswa-untuk-indonesia-lebih-baik-foto&catid=73:aktivitas&Itemid=169, accessed 8 September 2010, for the Indonesian version of the pledge and a photo gallery as well as a detailed description about the event. This web page is strongly supportive of the pledge.

PROMOTING THE CALIPHATE ON CAMPUS

ness of Indonesia's problems in the fields of natural resources, the economy, education, and politics, and outlining the urgent need to establish the caliphate as the sole solution, the pledge was read and repeated by the audience. Not only in Yogyakarta, but within ten days in almost thirty other Indonesian cities this congress had triggered similar events where students gathered to read out the same pledge together.²² The congress continued inspiring events over the next few months, for example on 24 April 2010, when over 2,000 students gathered at a conference in central Sulawesi to jointly read out the students' pledge and committed themselves to struggle to establish the caliphate.²³ The conference was promoted on the internet, and in the aftermath of the event the pledge, a professionally made video, and a large number of photos and reports could be accessed online so that the follow-up events taking place in various cities could draw on this material to organize their own events. The example of this congress shows not only what the most important declared aims of the organization are, but also how Hizbut Tahrir's activists use media technology to promote its events, as well as how the organization manages to create a communication network between different student activists to mobilize for its cause.

In the various discussions, both large and small, that I attended during my stints of fieldwork, Hizbut Tahrir activists were promoting their vision of a united Islamic community that would live in peace and prosperity. As outlined in the students' pledge, the ultimate goal of establishing the caliphate should not be reached by violent means. Rather, the core task of Hizbut Tahrir members was to convincingly sell the dream of the caliphate as an alternative mode of governance that would yield a better life for all, both Muslims and non-Muslims. This ideal that a better world is possible and that the way to achieve it is outlined in the Qur'an and *sunna* is reflected in statements given by Hizbut Tahrir student members about why they joined the organization and dedicate a lot of time, emotion, and energy to promoting its cause.

²² See for example on <http://kumpay.dagdigdug.com/sumpah-pemuda-berganti-menjadi-sumpah-mahasiswa/>, accessed 8 September 2010, for a detailed list of the involved cities. On the web portal www.dakwahkampus.com an extensive collection of photos of events organized in different cities can be found, as well as a professionally produced video of the first Indonesian Islamic Students' Congress.

²³ For a detailed account of the congress see <http://dakwahkampus.com/berita/isu-utama/842-kongres-mahasiswa-islam-sulawesi-tenggara-2000-mahasiswa-lebih-mendukung-syariah-a-khilafah.html>, accessed 8 September 2010.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

Tia²⁴ was born in Malang in 1984 into a family she considers ‘not very religious’. In 2000, while still at high school, she started studying the ideology of Hizbut Tahrir, and became an ordinary member of the organization in 2002. In 2004 she was accepted at the economics faculty of the Gadjah Mada University. Before beginning in a study circle of Hizbut Tahrir, she studied in circles of the *tarbiyah* movement. Tia’s activist career seems to bear similarities with the trajectories of other student members. Most of them come from what they define as ‘not very religious’ families, and most of them have been educated in state schools, rather than Islamic schools; some, however, have been to Islamic boarding-schools (*pesantren*). Most tend to become active in other Islamic groups before joining Hizbut Tahrir, because they seek, as they often say, to ‘learn more about Islam’. Often they are ‘invited’ to join Hizbut Tahrir’s weekly *halaqah* by peers or senior students of their high school or university who have already been attending these circles for some time. It is in these study circles that most current members seem to have become familiar with the ideological demands of Hizbut Tahrir. Tia declared,

Well, this is my personal opinion, but I saw all the problems that Indonesia is currently facing in the social, economic and in the political sphere. According to my opinion, Indonesia really needs to improve and I’m convinced that this improvement has to be inspired by Islam. The question is then, if we want to improve the situation with Islamic concepts, how should this happen? What are the concepts? Earlier, when I was studying in the circles of the *tarbiyah* movement, I did not get the answers. The *tarbiyah* movement is good in regard to moral guidance (*penbinaan akhlak*), but if we become the next Indonesian leaders what should we do? If we are sure that Islam provides solutions, then how should Islam inspire economic, political and social concepts? I did not get answers either in my studies nor in the circles of the *tarbiyah* movement. Maybe this is my fault. Maybe I did not study these thoughts deep enough. But at least, at the beginning we did not get these answers. Only after finding Hizbut Tahrir I found what I was looking for. This is what made me stay and study in Hizbut Tahrir. I feel that the Islamic concepts are complete and comprehensive.²⁵

Tia’s answer reflects what other activists told not only me, but also other researchers with regard to their motivations for joining the organization. Greg Fealy’s study about Hizbut Tahrir in Indonesia opens with a very simi-

²⁴ To protect the identity of people who are not—or not yet—well-known public figures, I use pseudonyms.

²⁵ Interview with Tia, March 2009, Yogyakarta.

lar quote by a member in Jakarta in 2005.²⁶ This activist also stresses that in Hizbut Tahrir everything is based on Islam, that a whole system of thinking is provided that gives answers to all kinds of problems. The current spokesman of Hizbut Tahrir, Ismail Yusanto, described what attracted him to the ideology of Hizbut Tahrir in a similar way in an interview conducted in 2003. He stated that before he found Hizbut Tahrir he had read the books of Sayyid Qutb and Hasan al-Banna of the Muslim Brotherhood: during the 1980s these two had become Islamic icons everywhere, including Indonesia. But after reading a few books by al-Nabhani that had already been translated into Indonesian, he really saw that the ideology of Hizbut Tahrir offered more.²⁷

At least in Indonesia, this narrative that Hizbut Tahrir provides the most comprehensive answers to common problems has become a hallmark of the organization. Opponents of the organization often criticize it for providing clear-cut answers to all problems, and especially for its conviction that the caliphate is the ultimate solution to all problems. Despite constantly facing this criticism Hizbut Tahrir student activists are convinced that the answers to all problems can be found in the Qur'an and the *sunna*, which constitute the two primary sources of Islamic jurisprudence. The rules can either be extracted directly from the Qur'an and the *sunna*, when explicitly stated, or reached through a process of deduction called *ijtihad*. Islam's ability to bring stability and 'liberate' humanity from the 'burdens of capitalism' that the country is facing seems to a dominant topic in the organization. The ideology is framed to provide an Islamic alternative to the current capitalist system. Reza, a geography student at the Gadjah Mada University, born in a small town in East Java in 1986 to a Nahdlatul Ulama²⁸ family, who became a Hizbut Tahrir member in 2006, explained:

In the field of law and justice, capitalism under the umbrella of neo-liberalism has given the authority to foreign companies to exploit all natural resources. PT Freeport or Exxon Mobil are among many other companies increasingly receiving

²⁶ Fealy, 'Hizbut Tahrir in Indonesia', p. 151.

²⁷ F. J. Jamhari and J. Jahroni, *Gerakan Salafi Radikal di Indonesia*, Jakarta: P.T. Raja Grafindo Persada, 2004, p. 171.

²⁸ Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) is the largest mass-based Islamic organization in Indonesia. It was founded in 1926 and currently claims around 50 million members. For a detailed study of recent developments within the NU see for example R. Bush, *Nahdlatul Ulama and the Struggle for Power within Islam and Politics in Indonesia*, Singapore: ISEAS, 2009.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

rights to massively exploit natural resources. Whereas the experts become wealthy, the poverty rate in the Indonesian society increases, education is becoming more expensive, health costs are expensive, criminality and corruption are increasing, as well as other social illnesses as rape, murder, HIV AIDS, drug use and abortion rates—these are all symptoms of the capitalist system. Seeing what is happening in Indonesia as well as in other Muslim countries, it is time that the Islamic *ummat*, especially the Muslim students in the world become aware of the rotten and degenerated system in the form of capitalism, as well as democracy, and acknowledge that there is only one total solution from the Islamic faith (*aqidah*), namely the Islamic ideology (*ideology Islam*) that is able to answer questions and guarantee for a life that is just, save, prosperous, that would support Muslims as well as non-Muslims. Struggling for the establishment of the caliphate is thus compulsory for all Muslims.²⁹

The fact that Hizbut Tahrir is not involved in party politics as it rejects democracy as an un-Islamic Western import has also been put forward as a reason why activists have opted to join Hizbut Tahrir. The choice to refrain from participating in the democratic system has been criticized by other activists, who have accused Hizbut Tahrir activists of not doing anything to really change society, but rather just dreaming of the caliphate. To counter the reproach of not being active in trying to effect societal change, Hari, a male activist enrolled at the faculty of medicine of the Gadjah Mada University, told me:

Fellow students often criticize that Hizbut Tahrir is not doing anything to really change society, instead, its members are busy dreaming about the caliphate that shall at some time in the future solve all problems. This is however not true, we are very active in explaining Muslims in a detailed manner the causes of the problems that Indonesia is facing. In my personal opinion, it is this careful and critical analysis inspired by Islamic concepts what makes our ideas attractive. People may well say that missing and longing for the caliphate is romantic or even useless, but as we are not involved in the corrupt democratic political system, people believe us as counterbalance.³⁰

The firm belief in the ideal of the caliphate may thus be seen as a basis to counteract current conditions and provide a system-critical analysis informed by what are seen as Islamic concepts *in combination with* academic research in any field of study. Especially to students studying at a non-Islamic university such as the Gadjah Mada University, the endeavour of merging Islam and academic knowledge in their particular field of study seems to be attrac-

²⁹ Interview with Reza, May 2009, Yogyakarta.

³⁰ Interview with Hari, Yogyakarta, April 2009.

PROMOTING THE CALIPHATE ON CAMPUS

tive.³¹ Hari continues by explaining what he means by ‘careful and critical analysis’, and refers to the academic approach of criticizing public malaises. When criticizing the poor Indonesian health system, for example, medical students work together with social science students as well as economic students to analyze problems in different fields related to the problem, such as low public expenditure, poor education of health workers, and limited access for the poor. They then provide concrete solutions as to how the health system would improve if the caliphate were to be established.

One important topic in most of the students’ discussions about what attracts them to work for the establishment of the caliphate is the importance of realizing how much they miss (*rindu*) the caliphate. On different occasions, especially larger gatherings of Hizbut Tahrir members as at the Students’ Congress or at the National Conference of Muslimah Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia held in December 2008 in Yogyakarta, students started weeping when talking about how much they missed and longed for the caliphate. This longing is also expressed in different poems and songs, carrying titles such as ‘*Aku rindu pada zaman itu*’ (I miss that time),³² ‘*Aku rindu khilafah*’ (I miss the caliphate), or ‘*Cinta khilafah*’ (Loving the caliphate). Different songs can be downloaded from the internet and clips can be watched for example on YouTube. Also, different Facebook communities carry names such as ‘the group of caliphate lovers’ or ‘community of students missing the caliphate’. This use of language shows how a cordial relationship is established that is able to cause a feeling of loss, longing, and love. It reveals closeness, an intense relationship with the caliphate, and a strong conviction that its establishment is the only way to progress and improvement.

THE STUDENTS’ STRUGGLE TO ESTABLISH THE CALIPHATE IN A DELIBERATIVE PUBLIC SPHERE

The question at hand is now how the caliphate should be established, since neither violence nor political participation in the democratic system is seen

³¹ Gadjah Mada University grants religion a space in its curriculum. It is compulsory for all students to take classes in their respective religions and pass exams. For Muslims, furthermore, it has since 2004 been obligatory to follow a tutoring system called Assistance in Islamic Religion (AAI: Asistensi Agama Islam). Apart from this, the curriculum is structured around disciplines.

³² For the full version of this poem see <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/khilafah/message/2605>, accessed 30 December 2010.

as a legitimate way to pursue this struggle. How do the students enrolled at the Gadjah Mada University struggle for the establishment of the caliphate? Al-Nabhani has laid out a three-stage programme to reach this goal. The first stage, which Hizbut Tahrir has already reached, is referred to as 'culturing' (*tatspiif*). The focus of this stage was the creation of the party and membership recruitment. Hizbut Tahrir at the Gadjah Mada University, as well as Hizb al-Tahrir all over the world, is currently in the second stage of this process, the phase of 'interaction' (*tafa'ul*) with society before taking power (*istilamu al-hukm*) and establishing the caliphate in the final stage.³³

The concept of *dakwah* is central in Hizbut Tahrir's endeavour to establish the caliphate. The term *dakwah* (Arabic *da'wa*) historically encompasses a broad range of meanings: it can literally be translated as 'summon' or 'call'. In the Indonesian context, as well as in other parts of the world, *dakwah* is commonly understood as the 'duty, incumbent upon some or all members of the Islamic community, to actively encourage fellow Muslims in the pursuance of greater piety in all aspects of their lives'.³⁴ The most cited Qur'anic reference for this interpretation is verse 3:104: 'And that there might grow out of you a community [of people] who invite unto all that is good, and enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid the doing of what is wrong: as it is they, they who shall attain to a happy state.'³⁵ According to Riskha Budiarti, a female Hizbut Tahrir activist at the Gadjah Mada University, there are hundreds of ways (*uslub*) that this struggle could look like, and there is room for personal creativity to interact with society and seek to convince it of the benefits of establishing the caliphate.³⁶ Importantly, Hizbut Tahrir members consider *dakwah* as a religious duty of all Muslims, as an act of divine worship. Neglecting the perceived duty to

³³ R.T. Budiarti, 'Civitas Akademika UGM Mewujudkan Bangsa yang mandiri, kuat, berpengaruh, terdepan, dan mulia dengan Khilafa' [The academic community of the Gadjah Mada University establishes an autonomous, strong, influential, progressive and honourable society under the caliphate], in C. Nef Saluz (ed.), *Dynamics of Islamic Student Movements*, Yogyakarta: Resist Book, 2009, (135–161), pp. 153–5; Hizbut Tahrir, *Mengenal Hizbut Tahrir dan Strategi Dakwah Hizbut Tahrir*, Bogor: Pustaka Thariqul Izzah, 2008, pp. 42–3.

³⁴ C. Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2006, pp. 108–9.

³⁵ Translated in M. Asad, *The Message of the Qur'an*, Dubai: Oriental Press, 2003. Other often cited verses for emphasizing the duty to call others to Islam are 3:110 and 16:125.

³⁶ Budiarti, 'Civitas Akademika', p. 158.

invite (*mengajak*) others to become ‘good’ or ‘true’ Muslims as envisioned by Hizbut Tahrir members is seen as not embracing and living Islam in a complete manner.³⁷

In general, Hizbut Tahrir focuses especially on targeting well-educated people, as they hold—or will hold—strategic positions in society. Intellectuals are furthermore seen as morally responsible for what is going on in a country, especially Muslim intellectuals.³⁸ People with good morality and profound knowledge are seen as necessary to cause systemic change and to hold important strategic positions within the new system. Students of the Gadjah Mada University, the biggest and oldest Indonesian university, are thus in an excellent position to become future leaders. Furthermore, a large majority of these students are Muslims. It would thus be deplorable if these excellently educated Muslims were to support the current capitalist secular system—not because they do not want to struggle for Islam, but because they are indoctrinated by that system’s ideology.³⁹ The idea that the ‘other’ students are indoctrinated and need to be brought back to the right path is widespread among Hizbut Tahrir student activists. The public arena is perceived as a space for debate between different individuals and, at the same time, as a normative space for spreading their own vision of Islamic virtues.

Hizbut Tahrir activists at the Gadjah Mada University have different strategies to mobilize support among fellow students. Their most obvious and visible strategy is to organize public discussions, conferences, and workshops for students. These events are usually thematic events and are promoted on posters the activists hang up on information boards across the campus, by flyers they distribute, and also via email, Facebook, and short messages. Hizbut Tahrir activists usually collect the names, email addresses, and phone numbers of each person that attends an event they organize, to invite her or him again personally for further upcoming events. It is a common practice, and not specific to Hizbut Tahrir, that participants in events register with their name, study number, phone number, email address, and faculty affiliation before attending any kind of event.

Some of these conferences and workshops are openly acknowledged as having been organized by Hizbut Tahrir, and the speakers are identified as its members. The organization’s activists also hold other events using the

³⁷ Ibid., p. 150.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 156.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 157.

name of a front organization or group. Often such groups exist only for a short time, and are founded by members sharing a specific concern, such as improving the sexual morality of students or to counter democratic elections. According to Hizbut Tahrir members, this is done mainly for two reasons: first, they hope to attract a broader audience, assuming that some people hold prejudices about Hizbut Tahrir that would prevent them from attending the event; and second, organizing an event under another name gives them more freedom and independence to design the event, as it does not need to pass the verification process by higher Hizbut Tahrir members to ensure that it is in full ideological conformity with the organization's ideology. At these events the speakers are at times declared as members of Hizbut Tahrir, while at others they are presented as experts in the relevant thematic field, such as 'expert on Islamic economics'. Also, Hizbut Tahrir activists often invite not only speakers from their own organization, but also from other organizations, government representatives, or university professors. Female Hizbut Tahrir activists are not allowed to represent the organization publicly in front of a non-female audience. Muslimah Hizbut Tahrir frequently arranges events designed for women only, where female activists address the audience.

These events, organized for a public audience, vary considerably in size as well as in the topics they address. For example, Muslimah Hizbut Tahrir organizes weekly public discussions (*kajian umum mingguan*) in the garden of the Gadjah Mada University mosque on Saturday mornings between seven and nine o'clock. In 2009, around twenty to thirty women, depending on the topic, commonly attended these events. In the first half of 2009 they discussed different topics in the fields of economics, social relations, politics, and law. On the first Saturday of every month they would discuss topics in the field of economics, described as follows: 'The financial crisis that reverberates, the poverty breaking out violently, the inflation that is caused by the capitalist system that this country has adopted. It is time that the Islamic Economy is enacted...!' On every second Saturday questions in the field of social interaction were on the agenda; the description says: 'The understanding of Muslims about the how men and women should interact in Islam is experiencing a terrible shock, because their understanding is far from the essence of Islam and they are far from Islamic ideas and Islamic law.' On every third Saturday political topics were on the agenda: 'Social matters are currently governed by secular capitalism, which has been proven to bring destruction to mankind. Only Islam will bring mercy to all.' On

the last Saturday of each month legal topics regarding contemporary issues (*fiqh kontemporer*) were debated, described as: 'Islam answers all sorts of law problems, for example concerning abortion, interest, and others.'⁴⁰ In these discussions a Hizbut Tahrir member would give a rather long speech using a microphone before opening the floor for questions and answers or comments from the audience. The participants are not critical of the ideology of Hizbut Tahrir, but rather demand explanations on different issues and ask for more clarification, or expand on what has been said by personal experiences, observations, or comments.

An example of a larger event taking place involving student activists of the Gadjah Mada University was the conference held in Yogyakarta on Saturday 13 December 2008 entitled '*Selamatkan Indonesia dari kapitalisasi pendidikan dan kesehatan dengan khilafah*' (Save Indonesia from the capitalization of education and health with the caliphate). Around 800 women, most of them still students, attended this conference. The main point made by the prominent female members of Hizbut Tahrir was that the current secular system will not be able to provide good health services and education to the whole community. Women in particular were seen as the disadvantaged group within the current capitalist system, and thus as a group that would benefit most from a systemic change. Students were involved in organizing the conference and in fundraising, as well as in handling registration, inviting the media, and promoting the event on campus.

Besides organizing public events, Hizbut Tahrir members are also encouraged to find individual ways of addressing fellow students and promoting the organization's concepts and ideas. One way is to engage with fellow students in informal discussions on the economic or political problems Indonesia is facing, and then promote the organization's solution of establishing the caliphate. Friends are approached and involved in discussions, but Hizbut Tahrir activists also seek actively to meet new people and make new friends. Most activists are therefore not only members of Hizbut Tahrir, but also often join other organizations or groups. For example, some activists I met joined the local branch of the Muslim Students' Association: the Assembly of the Savers of the Organization (HMI-MPO: *Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam-Majelis Penyelamat Organisasi*). This is one of the largest Muslim student organiza-

⁴⁰ See <http://muslimahhizbuttahrir.wordpress.com/2009/01/29/kajian-umum-mingguan-muslimah-hizbut-tahrir-indonesia-keluarga-besar-ugm/>, accessed 27 May 2010. The translations are my own.

tions in Indonesia. It is internally diverse and accommodates different strands of Islam. In particular, however, HMI-MPO's agenda of rejecting neo-liberalism is very much in line with the agenda of Hizbut Tahrir. Also, HMI-MPO regards, among others, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, and various multinational companies as enemies that need to be defeated, as they deprive Indonesia of its independence.⁴¹ Also, the HMI-MPO's focus on restoring Islamic morality is in line with Hizbut Tahrir's agenda.

The student organization that is directly linked to Hizbut Tahrir is called the Students' Liberation Movement (Gema Pembebasan or Gerakan Mahasiswa Pembebasan). This organization was founded in Jakarta in 2001.⁴² Although it has a local branch active in Yogyakarta, it has, at least until 2009, not been visible on the campus of the Gadjah Mada University, for example by organizing events or via media releases. According to a Hizbut Tahrir member of the Gadjah Mada University, this organization is too small in Yogyakarta and not influential. He told me that it is therefore more effective to organize events by openly declaring them as organized by Hizbut Tahrir, or engage in another organization such as HMI-MPO or Jamaah Shalahuddin that is already well established, or to found a special small group dedicated to a specific cause and often active only for a limited time.

Many Hizbut Tahrir student members of the Gadjah Mada University are active in organizations that are structurally linked to the university, for example in the University Dakwah Organization Jamaah Shalahuddin. They also try to hold strategic positions in the student council at the university level or the faculty level, especially in the Muslim sections of the faculty student councils, for example in the Muslim family law faculty. Another common way of being active outside the Hizbut Tahrir mother organization is to engage actively in student communities publishing faculty newsletters, or participate in one or more of the many discussion groups active in different faculties. Also, some of Hizbut Tahrir's student members opt to become members of university sports organizations, at least partly with the aim of promoting the organization's concepts to new friends. Further, Hizbut Tahrir activists are also encouraged to attend public events

⁴¹ S. Albar, and R. Kurniawan, 'Dialektika HMI MPO sebagai Gerakan Kritis di UGM' [The dialectic of HMI MPO as a critical movement at UGM], in C. Nef Saluz (ed.), *Dynamics of Islamic Student Movements: Iklim Intelektual di Kalangan Aktivis Kampus*, Yogyakarta: Resist, 2009, p. 25.

⁴² Osman, 'Reviving the Caliphate in the Nusantara', p. 9.

PROMOTING THE CALIPHATE ON CAMPUS

organized by other Islamic and non-Islamic organizations and to speak publicly and comment on what has been said, again using the occasion to promote the organization's concepts and solutions. Hizbut Tahrir members are often eager to speak up in class, and often criticize what both fellow students and lecturers say.

As Riskha stated, there are hundreds of ways to fulfil the divine duty, as Hizbut Tahrir activists frame it, do to *dakwah* and to promote the organization's ideology. Successfully doing *dakwah* becomes a skill that needs to be learned and constantly improved. Thus Hizbut Tahrir activists need not only to master the organization's ideology, but also to be politically well informed and able to relate the organization's ideas to contemporary issues. Further, rhetoric skills need to be developed, and people are trained in workshops to become self-confident, convincing public speakers. Besides speaking, writing skills also need to be honed to spread the message in blogs, via email, or by writing articles, short stories, or poems. Becoming a successful *dakwah* activist requires a lot of self-discipline and training. Besides mastering the organization's ideology, rhetoric skills, management skills, and writing skills, Hizbut Tahrir members also constantly need to ensure that their outward appearance and behaviour are in line with the ideology they promote. This includes a specific dress code, as discussed, but also strict gender segregation, not shaking hands with the opposite sex, not smoking, and refraining from laughing loudly in public or gossiping.

CONCLUSION: AN ISLAMIC ALTERNATIVE TO SECULAR-LIBERAL MODERNITY

In Indonesia as in other parts of the world the intensified global circulation of information and capital has correlated with an intensification of Islamic practice highly critical of the current global system. With its central call to resist the democratic system and the capitalist world economy, and offering instead what it calls an Islamic alternative, the ideology of Hizbut Tahrir has been attracting increasing support among well-educated professionals and students of both sexes. On Indonesian campuses Islamic groups calling for the establishment of the *shari'a* seem largely to have displaced both secular nationalist and leftist movements demanding resistance to what they call Western political, economic, and cultural domination.

There seems to be no easy answer as to why well-educated students who tend to see themselves as part of the future elite of the country opt to join

Hizbut Tahrir or sympathize with the idea of establishing a global caliphate under the enactment of the *shari'a*. However, assuming a lack of education and absence of the capacity for critical thought does not explain why students are successfully promoting this idea of political governance among their peers. Calling for the establishment of the caliphate and the enactment of the *shari'a* is a modernist project. What seems to be at stake is two competing political projects, inspired by different visions of an ideal future. Personal development is demanded by Hizbut Tahrir activists as well as by secular-liberal inspired understandings of development. The question that seems interesting to examine is thus not whether one societal vision is more or less modern, but rather how these different understandings influence practice, and ultimately how each project encourages moral development. Submitting oneself to a form of collective discipline such as that demanded by Hizbut Tahrir and pledging ideological conformity should thus not be interpreted as a lack of critical thinking, but rather as a conscious choice of an alternative path of societal and personal development that also demands active leaning and self-transformation.

Forms of modern power have influenced and shaped how Hizbut Tahrir student activists struggle in their everyday lives to reach their ideological goal: the establishment of the caliphate. Modernization has changed the terrain upon which the campaign for the caliphate takes place. New spaces have opened up to articulate alternative visions for society as well as new ways of embodying historical experiences. In particular, two important changes have taken place since the emergence of Hizb al-Tahrir in Jerusalem in the 1950s and its Indonesian branch, Hizbut Tahrir, in the 1980s: first, different media technology is available to support the struggle for the caliphate; and second, the overall political climate has since the fall of Suharto in 1998 become increasingly liberal, allowing Hizbut Tahrir to operate legally in public. Modern media technology has made information dissemination much easier, especially the internet and cellular phones, both commonly used by students. Time-space relations have become contracted and have thus speeded up communication, allowing like-minded individuals to share their thoughts, ideas and writings across time and space. Coordinating different events and 'actions' (*aksi*) over distance has become faster and cheaper than ever before.

Hizbut Tahrir activists do not interpret the current political liberal climate as freedom to do what one wants, but rather as freedom to do what is 'right'. The submission to the party ideology that they see as representing

the true understanding of Islam is thus not a matter of choice, but rather the duty of every Muslim. Equally, trying to convince others by discussion and argument, not by violence, of their ideology is seen as integral part of divine worship and of being a 'good Muslim'. It is not surprising that those adhering to this religious conviction face severe opposition from different Islamic as well as non-Islamic groups active on the campus of the Gadjah Mada University, as well as in Indonesia more generally. Nevertheless, the membership numbers as well as general support for claims made by Hizbut Tahrir seem to be increasing. Understanding contemporary debates taking place in other countries and in different societal groups, as well as outlining mobilization and advocacies taking place in different economic and political contexts, might shed more light on the revival of the idea of re-establishing the caliphate.

ADHERING TO NEO-CALIPHATISM

THE IDEOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION
OF THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT OF UZBEKISTAN*Emmanuel Karagiannis*

INTRODUCTION

The Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan has attracted much interest from both the policy-making and academic communities. Contrary to the common perception, however, the insurgents are hardly a unified force. Indeed, guerrilla groups of Central Asian origin, such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (Ozbekiston Islomiy Harakati, hereafter IMU) and its splinter (or satellite) group the Islamic Jihad Union (Jama'at al-Jihad, hereafter IJU), have increasingly been active in the region.

The IMU was established by exiled Uzbek Islamists in the late 1990s to fight against the Karimov regime in Uzbekistan. The movement's leadership used Afghanistan as a base of operations to launch cross-border incursions into Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan in the summers of 1999 and 2000. The IMU was almost destroyed by the 2001 US invasion of Afghanistan. Its military leader, Juma Namangani, was killed during an air strike in Afghanistan in November 2001. Consequently, the remaining members of the group, under its political leader Tohir Yuldotshev, took refuge in the tribal areas along the Afghan border with Pakistan.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

Despite its retreat to north-west Pakistan, the IMU is far from being defeated. It has launched attacks in both Afghanistan and Pakistan, targeting NATO forces and the Pakistani army respectively. Indeed, it represents an interesting case of a militant Islamist group transformed from a national into an internationalized force. The leadership has remained in the hands of ethnic Uzbeks, but the group has expanded to recruit members of other ethnic groups, such as Tajiks, Chechens, Kyrgyz, and Arabs.

In recent years there has been a proliferation of articles about the IMU.¹ Yet these studies have largely focused on the military and organizational aspects of the IMU's campaign, ignoring the ideational dynamics that drove the group from local to global *jihad*. The IMU has adhered to an ideology of Neo-Caliphatism, which advocates the establishment of a pan-Islamic state and the spread of Islam worldwide.

This chapter will first describe the roots of the IMU, focusing on the two founders, Juma Namangani and Tohir Yuldotshev. Then, it will cover the early history of the IMU when it fought against Kyrgyz and Uzbek forces in Central Asia during 1999–2000. It will also describe the Talibanization of the IMU, which eventually led to the emergence of the IJU. In addition, the chapter will focus on the ideological transformation of the IMU and its switch from localized Islamic revolution to an Islamic globalization. Finally, it will conceptualize the IMU's endorsement of Neo-Caliphatism as a guiding ideology.

THE ROOTS OF THE IMU

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Uzbekistan witnessed an Islamic revival. Hundreds of mosques and *medressas* were built or restored in the country; Qur'ans and Islamic literature were brought in from Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Pakistan. The hotbed of Islamic revival was the Ferghana Valley, which is located between Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. It is 300 kilometres long and 170 kilometres wide; about 60 per cent of the valley's

¹ See, for example, Vitaly Naumkin, *Militant Islam in Central Asia: The Case of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan*, Berkeley, CA: Institute of Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies, 2003; Richard Weitz, 'Storm Clouds over Central Asia: Revival of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan?', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 27, 6 (2004), 505–30; Deirdre Tynan, 'Central Asia: The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan Undergoing Dangerous Transformation', *Eurasianet.org*, 19 October 2009, available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav102009b.shtml>.

territory lies in Uzbekistan (4.3 per cent of Uzbek territory), 25 per cent in Tajikistan (18.2 per cent of state territory), and the remaining 15 per cent in Kyrgyzstan (42.2 per cent of state territory). With a population of about 10 million, the tri-national Valley is the most densely settled area in Central Asia. The local population is more religious than in the rest of the region, possibly because the Ferghana Valley was populated by a settled agricultural population earlier than other regions, and as a result Islam has deep roots there. The early development of a mosque-centred faith in the Ferghana Valley means that the local population is accustomed to thinking that Islam can provide solutions to problems.

Although the IMU was officially established in the late 1990s, its founding members had had a long history of Islamic activism going back to the early post-Soviet period. Juma Namangani, an afghan war veteran, and Tohir Yuldotshev, a young *'alim*, were members of the Uzbekistan branch of the all-USSR Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP), which was established in 1990.

In December 1991 a group of Muslims seized the Communist Party headquarters in the city of Namangan after the mayor refused to give them land upon which to build a mosque. Islam Karimov (who had been elected president of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic in March 1990) travelled there to address the protesters. This first encounter with Islamists was a traumatic experience for Karimov, evidenced by his account of the events:

On 8 December 1991, I went to Namangan and met face to face with those, who had lost their minds and called themselves as 'Allah's warriors' including Tohir Yuldotshev. I took the microphone from him and spoke. Who remembers it? At that time they insisted on proclaiming the Islamic state. I still remember those bearded persons, attracting people by raising these matters. I still remember their voices.²

Disillusioned at the IRP's refusal to abandon its relatively moderate position, Namangani and Yuldotshev established their own organization, Adolat (Justice), which called for the imposition of *shari'a* and the creation of an Islamic state in Uzbekistan. The group, consisting mainly of young men, attempted to enforce *shari'a* in parts of the Ferghana Valley. Its squads patrolled the streets of Namangan and detained people suspected of engaging in 'un-Islamic behavior' (such as gambling, trade in alcoholic drinks, prostitution).³ According to Abdumannob Polat many members of Adolat had

² Islam Karimov, 'Freedom to Profess Faith Must be on Lawful Ground', speech made at the XI Session of the Oliy Majlis, 1 May 1998, available at www.president.uz, accessed 1 March 2009.

³ Bakhtiyar Babadzhanov, 'Religious-opposition Groups in Uzbekistan', in *Proceedings*

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

received the status of police volunteer assistants, which implied a degree of collaboration between the group and authorities.⁴ In any case, the Uzbek authorities outlawed Adolat in March 1992, arresting many of its members.

The repression of Adolat and the crackdown on the Islamist movement radicalized Uzbek Islamists. Adolat's leadership fled to neighbouring Tajikistan and joined the local Islamist movement, which was dominated by the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan (*Hizbi Nahzati Islomii Tojikiston*, hereafter IRPT). In December 1992 the neo-communist Tajik government banned all opposition parties, including the IRPT. By early 1993 Uzbek Islamists, together with tens of thousands of Tajiks, had fled to Afghanistan. In response to government repression, the IRPT together with the Western-oriented Democratic Party, the nationalist Rastokhez movement, and the separatist Lali Badakhshan (a Pamiri separatist organization) formed the United Tajik Opposition (UTO). The UTO set up bases in Afghanistan and begun launching hit-and-run attacks against government forces. Some Afghan Mujahideen leaders, such as the ethnic Tajik warlord Ahmad Shah Massoud, supported the UTO militarily and logistically. Uzbek Islamists under Namangani fought alongside the UTO until the war ended in a compromise in 1997, while Yuldoshev focused on fundraising and organizational matters. Following the ceasefire in Tajikistan, members of Adolat and other Islamist groups that had been operating in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan united in Afghanistan to form the IMU some time during 1998.

THE IMU BEFORE THE EVENTS OF 9/11

The IMU's inaugural attack on the Uzbek regime attracted the world's attention. On 16 February 1999 six car bombs targeting government facilities exploded in different parts of Tashkent, killing sixteen people and wounding more than a hundred others. The Uzbek authorities claimed that the aim of the attacks was to assassinate President Karimov and blamed Islamic militants, although there were widespread rumours that the explo-

of the Conference on Combating Religious Extremism in Central Asia: Problems and Perspectives, Dushanbe: Sharq Center, 2002, 37–52, p. 43.

⁴ Abdumannob Polat, 'The Islamic Revival in Uzbekistan: A Threat to Stability?', in R. Sagdeev and S. Eisenhower (eds), *Islam and Central Asia: An Enduring Legacy or An Evolving Threat?*, Washington: Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 2000, 39–57.

sions were the work of the Uzbek secret services. It has also been argued that these bombings were part of an internal power struggle in Uzbekistan, and were aimed at shoring up the influence of one clique in the ruling elite.⁵ It should be noted that the IMU never officially accepted responsibility for the attacks, but the Uzbek authorities condemned eleven IMU militants to death and sentenced 120 others to long prison terms.⁶

In August 1999 IMU fighters crossed from Tajikistan into southern Kyrgyzstan, kidnapped Japanese and Kyrgyz nationals, and engaged in clashes with the Kyrgyz forces. They demanded a free corridor through the territory of Kyrgyzstan to Uzbekistan. Despite its limited resources and poor organization, the Kyrgyz army forced the IMU fighters back into Tajikistan. The rebels eventually released the Japanese hostages, possibly after obtaining a ransom from the Japanese government. In November an IMU unit infiltrated a mountainous area about 80 kilometres east of the capital, Tashkent, where it battled against Uzbek troops.

During the spring and summer of 2000 Tajikistan-based IMU units invaded the Surkhandar'inskaya Oblast in southern Uzbekistan. In August 2000 IMU fighters raided small villages over a wide area along the Kyrgyz-Tajik borders. Four US citizens were taken hostage by IMU fighters in southern Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyz forces drove back the intruders to Tajikistan. Under pressure from the international community, Tajikistan expelled the IMU fighters from the Karategin Valley, where the group was reported to have been based for several years. The IMU forces finally returned to Afghanistan.

During 1999–2000 the IMU was organized as a guerrilla force, fighting Central Asian armed forces for the purpose of occupying territory. The 'liberated land' would have been the nucleus of an Islamic state in Central Asia. Estimates of the number of IMU guerrillas ranged from several hundred to several thousand.⁷ The IMU fighters, mostly armed with light weaponry, could have not defeated their better-equipped opponents. Nevertheless, the IMU infiltration became an issue of contention among the three Central Asian countries concerned; each accused the others of

⁵ See Gulnoza Saidazimova, 'Uzbekistan: Islam Karimov vs. the Clans', *Eurasia Insight*, 23 April 2005, available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/pp042305.shtml>.

⁶ US Department of State, 'Patterns of Global Terrorism: 1999—Uzbekistan', April 2000, p. 15, available at <http://www.state.gov/www/global/terrorism/1999report/patterns.pdf>.

⁷ Weitz, 'Storm Clouds over Central Asia', p. 506.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

abetting the IMU fighters. Also, as a result of those actions, the IMU was listed by the US Department of State as a terrorist organization in 2000.

THE TALIBANIZATION OF THE IMU

During the 2001 US invasion of Afghanistan the IMU fought alongside the Taliban. Following the defeat of its allies and the death of Juma Namangani the IMU was forced to retreat to north-west Pakistan, which is populated mostly by Pashtun tribes. The loss of its sanctuary in Afghanistan practically cut off the group from Central Asia. The isolation of the IMU members in Pakistan's tribal areas meant that the group became a sect-like community which largely depended on external support. It therefore had to abandon its ambitions to overthrow President Karimov and establish an Islamic state in Central Asia.

Mystery surrounds the circumstances under which the IJU was established in 2002 or 2003. Some analysts have speculated that the IMU has attempted to expand its organizational base by establishing this satellite group for the recruitment of non-Uzbeks,⁸ while others claim that the IJU was established by members of the IMU who disagreed with Yuldoshev over the IMU's orientation.⁹ In any case, the founders of the IJU were Abu Yahya, Mohammed Fatih, and Mansur Sohail.¹⁰

In March 2004 the IJU claimed responsibility for suicide bombing attacks against the Uzbek police. According to a statement posted on an Islamist website, 'these operations came as a response to the injustice and brutality practiced by the infidel leaders in [Uzbekistan]'.¹¹ The Uzbek authorities reported that forty-seven people, including thirty-three alleged

⁸ Cerwyn Moore, 'The Rise and the Fall of the Islamic Jihad Union: What Next for Uzbek Terror Networks?', *The Jamestown Foundation Terrorism Monitor*, 8, 14, 9 April 2010, available at http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Bsword%5D=8fd5893941d69d0be3f378576261ae3e&tx_ttnews%5Bany_of_the_words%5D=yuldashev&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=36251&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=4afa67395735c054715b301848b1718d.

⁹ Bruno De Cordier, 'The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and the Islamic Jihad Union: A Jihadi Nebulous in Central Asia and the EU', 2 July 2008, available at www.caucas.com/home_eng/breve_contenu.php?id=344.

¹⁰ Ronald Sandee, 'The Islamic Jihad Union', 14 October 2008, available at http://www.actforamericaeducation.com/downloads/All_Files_by_Type/nefaijuoct08.pdf, accessed on 3 March 2011.

¹¹ 'Islamic Group Claims Uzbekistan Violence', *Times of Central Asia*, 15 April 2004.

terrorists and ten police officers, were killed between 28 and 31 March.¹² In July 2004 blasts at the Israeli and US embassies and the general prosecutor's office killed at least three members of the Uzbek security forces in Tashkent. Once again the IJU claimed responsibility for the suicide attacks. The details of these attacks remain sketchy, because there is no independently verified information about perpetrators. Yet it is obvious that the attacks involved a large number of individuals, including women, who had received some training in bomb making. The IJU could have not hoped to overthrow the Karimov regime. Instead, its actions were aimed at inciting unrest and provoking a heavy-handed response to turn the populace against the Uzbek authorities.

While the IJU was launching terrorist attacks in Uzbekistan, the IMU remained almost inactive. Despite widespread rumours about the infiltration of IMU units into Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, the group apparently halted its activities during 2002–3.¹³ In mid-April 2004 the Tajik security services announced that they had arrested twenty members of the terrorist Islamic group Bayat ('pledge' in Arabic) in the Isfara district in northern Tajikistan.¹⁴ The group was allegedly responsible for the murder of the Protestant pastor Serghyey Bessaraba, who had been actively involved in spreading Christianity among Tajiks, while possibly maintaining links with the IMU.

In the mid-2000s the IMU's membership was certainly boosted by refugees fleeing persecution by the Uzbek authorities. In particular, the government crackdown in Andizhan in May 2005 led to an exodus of religious Uzbeks from the Ferghana Valley. The Andizhan uprising was sparked by protests most probably organized by Akramiya, a local Islamist group named after its founder, Akram Yuldashev. It appears that members of Akramiya had established small businesses in the field of construction and agriculture and engaged in charitable work in Andizhan and the surrounding area. However, Uzbek police arrested the heads of these enterprises in

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Igor Rotar, 'The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan: A Resurgent IMU?', *The Jamestown Foundation Terrorism Monitor*, 1, 8, 18 December 2003 available at http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=26187&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=178&no_cache=1

¹⁴ Zafar Abdullaev, 'Tajikistan: Concern at New Islamic Group', *IWPR Reporting Central Asia*, 27 April 2004, available at <http://iwpr.net/report-news/tajikistan-concern-new-islamic-group>.

2004 and put them on trial. In the evening of 12 May 2005 supporters of the businessmen facing trial attacked a local police station, seized weapons, took hostages, and broke into a nearby jail and released political prisoners. The next day armoured cars entered Babur Square, where thousands of unarmed protesters had gathered, and fired indiscriminately into the crowd. There is only speculation about the number of people killed that day, with estimates ranging from 170 to more than 700.¹⁵ The Uzbek authorities immediately claimed that those killed were Islamist extremists, but it seems that most of the victims were innocent bystanders.

In response, on the eve of the fifth anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Tohir Yuldashev emailed media outlets with a statement threatening Central Asian governments with new attacks. His statement said:

The Mujahideen haven't forgotten the Muslims executed in Andizhan last year. We will avenge Muslims in Central Asia ... We insist that all regimes in the region put an end to the practice persecution of Muslims, the practice of harassment and terror ... Karimov, Rahmonov, and Bakiyev had better remember ... that they will be punished for the crimes they are committing.¹⁶

In this case the IMU presented itself as a pan-Central Asian group fighting against those who have unjustly persecuted Muslims.

While the group struggled to remain relevant to its Central Asian constituency, it also had to deal with inhospitable neighbours. In March 2007 fighting broke out near Wana, the main town in South Waziristan, the southernmost of Pakistan's tribal areas; it pitted a group composed largely of IMU-affiliated Uzbek militants against local Pashtun tribesmen.¹⁷ It appears that the IMU was no longer able to count on refuge in Pakistan's tribal belt. The group therefore had to move further north.

¹⁵ Christopher J. Chivers, 'Tales of Uzbek Violence Suggest Larger Tragedy', *New York Times*, 19 May 2005, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/19/international/asia/19uzbekistan.html>.

¹⁶ See Hayder Mill, 'IMU Leader Yuldashev Issues Warning to Central Asian Governments', *The Jamestown Foundation Terrorism Focus*, 3, 37, 26 September 2006, available at http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=916.

¹⁷ John C.K. Daly, 'Uzbek Fighters in Pakistan Reportedly Return to Afghanistan', *The Jamestown Foundation Terrorism Monitor*, 4, 7, 27 March 2007, available at http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Bsword%5D=8fd5893941d69d0be3f378576261ae3e&tx_ttnews%5Bany_of_the_words%5D=yuldashev&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=1053&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=2e8b1ef46a401a8360526d8729fe6ca1.

In North Waziristan, however, the IMU was targeted by both the Pakistani army and the US forces. The embattled group finally lost its leader. The death of Tohir Yuldoshev in an August 2009 US predator airstrike in north-west Pakistan devastated the IMU members, as was evidenced by the following statement issued on 17 August 2010:

And now the year will end since the disaster [of Yuldoshev's death] we were hit, but we silenced the news to avoid weakening the determination and self-esteem of Muslims, and so the disbelievers won't increase in arrogance; we ask Allah to enter our Amir and the other martyrs into heaven's paradise, and to award the Mujahideen steadfastness and candor, Amen.¹⁸

Following the death of Yuldoshev, Abu Usman Adil, who had served as Yuldoshev's deputy, became the *amir* of the IMU. Little is known about the new leader of the IMU. It is not clear yet how the death of its founder will affect the movement's ability to operate in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

What is certain is that the IMU's geographical relocation inevitably led to a dramatic ideological metamorphosis. The harsh reality of surviving in Pakistan's tribal areas meant that the group needed all the support it could get from local allies. The Taliban's support was vital, but it came with a cost: the gradual de-Uzbekification of the IMU, which now had to fight a war that was not its own.

THE IDEOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE IMU

In contrast to other Islamist groups (such as Hizbollah, Hamas, Hizb ut-Tahrir) the IMU has not produced a vast amount of literature from which to glean insights about its ideological platform. In the first few years of its existence, however, it produced some statements that could shed light on its ideological origins.

Initially the IMU targeted the Karimov regime in Uzbekistan. Therefore the first statements it produced referred to the religious persecution in Uzbekistan and appealed to devout Uzbek Muslims. The group denounced the Uzbek leadership for continuing the policies of its 'Bolshevik teachers by repressing Islam, persecuting believers, closing mosques, and generally promoting secularism, this time at the behest of the United States and

¹⁸ O'zbekiston Islomiy Harakati qo'mondon Tohir Yo'ldoshev o'limi haqida e'lon qilm-oqda [The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan announces the martyrdom of Commander Tohir Yuldashev], 17 August 2010

Israel'. According to the IMU, such policies 'give [the Uzbek] people the right to replace this evil by force'.¹⁹

Moreover, the IMU demanded the establishment of a transitional government for a six-month period during which Islamists were to be released from prison and exiles allowed to return from abroad; a council of the *'ulama* was to select suitable people for drawing up legislation in accordance with the *shari'a*; 'selected people' were to be elected to a Supreme Council which would constitute the country's new leadership; and finally, all 'unjust agreements that were signed with the despotic forces of the world would have been cancelled', and 'Uzbekistan would never have friendly relations with countries that carry out hostile actions against Islam or seized Muslim land or have supported those crimes'.²⁰

In April 1999 Iran's state radio station broadcast another statement on behalf of the IMU that described Karimov and his government as acting 'in the forefront of US and Israeli attempts to enslave the peoples of Central Asia, to plunder their wealth [and] to build military bases'. The statement repeatedly called Karimov 'Jewish' and an 'unbeliever seeking to secure privileges for Judaism and Christianity in Uzbekistan, to the detriment of Islam'.²¹ In August 1999 the IMU announced that its struggle against the Karimov regime was aimed at '[defending] the scholars and Muslim youth who are being assassinated, imprisoned and tortured in extreme manners—with no rights given them at all [and] to secure the release of the weak and oppressed who number some 5,000 in prison, held by the transgressors'.²²

These statements reveal a group of vigilantes seeking to overthrow the Karimov regime and establish an Islamic state in Uzbekistan. The outbreak of the IMU insurgency coincided with the political de-liberalization of the Uzbek state in the late 1990s. Indeed, the IMU capitalized on the regime's repressive policies to mobilize support among Uzbekistan's Muslim popula-

¹⁹ No author, 'Militant Islamic Group Serves Ultimatum on Uzbekistan from Iran', *The Jamestown Foundation's Terrorism Monitor*, 5, 60, 26 March 1999, available at http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=12817&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=213.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ No author, 'Iranian Propaganda Targets Uzbekistan', *The Jamestown Foundation's Terrorism Monitor*, 5, 74, 16 April 1999, available at http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=12684&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=213.

²² Ahmed Rashid, *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia*, London: Penguin, 2002, p. 248.

tion. Interestingly, its discourse about America and Israel echoed decades of similar Marxist-Leninist phraseology in Soviet Central Asia.

A more careful reading of the statements could show that the IMU espoused jihadi Salafism, calling on modern Muslims to revert to the authentic Islam of the Prophet Muhammad and his Companions, the *salaf* or 'ancient ones'.²³ The group envisioned a state governed by *shari'a* that would oppose the West. The IMU advocates a strict interpretation of Islam, but it does not oppose modern technology and makes use of the internet to spread its message.

The US invasion of Afghanistan and the group's subsequent withdrawal to Pakistan had a profound effect on its strategy and objectives. Being far away from home, the IMU had to abandon its Uzbek-specific issues in order to address a larger Muslim audience. According to *furgon.com*, an Uzbek-language website run by the IMU, the group has aimed at 'establishing Allah's order at earth; freeing Palestine and Arabia from infidels; and reestablishing the historic Caliphate that existed for 13 centuries and shed light on Muslims'.²⁴ The focus on Palestine and Arabia clearly indicates that the Taliban's hospitality comes with a price: Central Asia in general and Uzbekistan in particular are no longer at the epicentre of the IMU's armed struggle.

In recent years, therefore, the group has paid less attention to the Karimov regime and the situation in Uzbekistan; the IMU now fights a guerrilla war against the US and other '*kuffar* countries'. In the words of Yuldashev:

The people who made our nation proud by carrying out the 9/11 martyrdom operations in New York and Washington were the 19 best people of our nation. All the martyrs in Afghanistan, Chechnya, Iraq, Palestine and elsewhere should be seen as role models. Allah willing we will reach America. The goal of this campaign is not only Kabul, Kandahar, or Baghdad. The eyes of the nation of Muhammad are set on Washington, London, Moscow, Paris, Delhi, Beijing and other countries.²⁵

The Palestinian issue has been of particular concern for the IMU because of the emotions that it arouses among Muslims world-wide. According to an IMU audio message, 'the main reason of the killing of our fellow brothers in Palestine is their holy faith to Islam. The recent military operations of

²³ Naumkin, *Militant Islam in Central Asia*, pp. 48–9.

²⁴ 'Maqsadimiz' [Aims], available at <http://furgon.info/Nashriyot.html>, accessed 3 April 2011.

²⁵ Interview with Tohir Yuldoshev, 3 December 2007, available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YACR1B8tU5M>.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

the grandchildren of pigs and monkeys ... prove the hate of the infidels against Muslims'.²⁶ The overemphasis on Palestine can only mean that the IMU aims at reaching an audience that is susceptible to anti-Jewish rhetoric, and that is Afghanistan and Pakistan's populations.

The IMU has also been particularly vicious against the Pakistani army, which has launched military operations against foreign Mujahideen in the north-west areas. According to a statement, 'with regard to the current war tactics of the Pakistani army, it must be said at first that the Pakistani army is a criminal, cowardly, lying, insidious and anxiously puppet of Satan'.²⁷ Such rhetoric targets the local population upon whom the IMU depends, as well as IMU's members and supporters who need a justification for battling fellow Muslims. Moreover, its anti-Pakistan stance has been a concession to Baitullah Mehsud, the leader of the Pakistan Taliban Movement (Tehrik-i Taliban Pakistan), who was the most important IMU ally in the Pashtun tribal areas before he was killed in August 2009.²⁸

THE IMU'S NEO-CALIPHATISM

The adoption of such an expanded political agenda has been rationalized by referring to a new unit of analysis; the *umma*, not Central Asia's Muslim faithful, has come to be at the IMU's centre of gravity. Instead of fighting a war against Central Asian regimes the group has now been involved in an open-ended religious conflict between the *umma* and its enemies. Thus it has made reference to conflicts elsewhere, portraying Muslims as the victims of infidel aggression. From Yuldoshev's point of view the roots of Muslim decline lie in the absence of self-determination for the *umma*: 'The Islamic nation ... has been living in humiliation, suffering from motivational, material, spiritual, and physical problems. Today, the Islamic nation has a

²⁶ 'O'zbekiston Islomiy Harakatining Falastindagi Yahudiylar Qir'giniga Munosabati' [The IMU statement about the recent genocide in Palestine], available at <http://furgon.com/Audio/M.Tohir/Falastin.mp3>, accessed 5 April 2011.

²⁷ Abu Adam al-Almani, 'Neujahr in Waziristan' [New Year in Waziristan], 19 January 2001, available at <http://www.worldanalysis.net/cha11/neujah.pdf>, accessed 23 March 2011.

²⁸ Guido Steinberg, 'A Turkish Al Qaeda: The Islamic Jihad Union and the Internationalization of Uzbek Jihadism', *Strategic Insights*, 7, 3, (2008), p. 6, available at <http://www.nps.edu/Academics/centers/ccc/publications/OnlineJournal/2008/Jul/steinbergJul08.pdf>, accessed 7 April 2011.

billion and a half followers, but throughout the world, they are all under the rule of others.²⁹

This change of focus is not hard to understand. According to Madawi Al-Rasheed, 'the unity of the ummah, its humiliation and its expected rejuvenation are portrayed as transnational themes mobilizing Muslims regardless of their cultural background'.³⁰ In this way the IMU has been able to attract sympathy and support from outside Central Asian communities.

Although little is known about group dynamics and the identity-formation process within the IMU, it seems that its members have developed a hybrid identity that combines jihadi Salafism with Islamic universalism. Indeed, the scant information that exists about the IJU's members can be a valuable source of information, assuming that the two groups are interconnected. Eric Breininger, a German convert to Islam, joined the IJU during 2007. His memoirs, which were posted on jihadi websites after his death in Pakistan in April 2010, offered a rare look into the world of IJU's fighters. In 'Mein Weg nach Jannah' [My path to paradise], Breininger revealed this new identity:

The environment allows the breeding of children free from the kufr of western society ... This new generation of mujahideen grows up multilingual. They usually learn Arabic, Turkish, English, Pashtun, Urdu and their parent's tongue ... With God's permission this offspring will become a special generation of terrorists that is not listed in any of the enemy's databases. They speak their enemy's languages, know their manners and customs and are able to mask and infiltrate the land of the kuffar because of their appearance.³¹

This new post-territorial Islamic identity, described aptly by Breininger, would eventually create a *Homo Islamicus* who will live and die by the Qur'an and the Kalashnikov. This new man could benefit from being member of the *umma*, which is a complex system of transnational networks fostering solidarity and cooperation.³²

²⁹ Excerpts from a video clip of Tohir Yuldotshev where he tells of his encounters with Osama bin Laden, 14 October 2010, available at <http://www.memritv.org/clip/en/2649.htm>, accessed on 30 March 2011.

³⁰ Madawi Al-Rasheed, 'The Local and the Global in Saudi Salafi Jihadi Discourse', in R. Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism: Islam's New Islamic Movement*, London: Hurst & Company, 2009, 301–320, p. 307.

³¹ Eric Breininger, 'Mein Weg nach Jannah' [My Path to Paradise], available at <http://www.scribd.com/doc/31071994/Schaheed-Abdul-Ghaffar-al-Almani-Mein-Weg-Nach-Jannah>, accessed 1 February, 2011.

³² Paul M. Lubeck, 'The Islamic Revival: Antinomies of Islamic Movements Under

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

Furthermore, the IMU has not only provided a straightforward explanation for the Muslim world's problems, it has also put forward a strategy for the revival of the *umma*:

We should seek the answer in the Quran, the Sunnah, and Islamic history. When were we happy? When we were living according to the Quran and Sunnah, when we were living under the rule of the Quran. Back then, we were happy and we were the rulers. But after we forsook the rule of the Quran, we became the way we are today.³³

In effect, the group has endorsed an idealized version of early Islamic history, advocating a return to the golden years of the Prophet Muhammad. Not being able to reach out to Central Asia, the group has joined the quest for the establishment of a caliphate which would include all Muslim-populated territories. According to a statement issued by Abdulfattoh Ahmadi, the press secretary of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, in June 2010, '[Muslims] won't remove the influence of American and Russian occupiers on our earth, until we establish the united Islamic state'.³⁴

The IMU has not offered a concrete plan for the proposed state, but the idea of a universal Islamic state, powerful enough to challenge the West, is attractive to some Central Asian Muslims who have lost their collective self-esteem in the post-Soviet era. Besides, this is a familiar message for Central Asian peoples, who were for seventy years exposed to the USSR's internationalist propaganda that downplayed nationalism and promoted socialist solidarity. The IMU therefore abandoned the Stalinist-like revolution-in-one-country approach and opted for a Trotskyist global Islamic revolution which could lead to the establishment of the caliphate.

But the struggle for the caliphate preceded the establishment of the IMU. Following its defeat in the First World War the Ottoman Empire, which was the seat of the caliphate, faced dismemberment. Surprisingly, the first reaction came from British India. Under the leadership of Maulana Muhammad Ali and Maulana Shaukat Ali (the so-called Ali brothers), the All-India Khilafat Committee was established to mobilize India's Muslim

Globalization', in R. Cohen and S.M. Rai (eds) *Global Social Movements*, London: Athlone Press, 2000, 146–164, pp. 153–4.

³³ Excerpts from a video clip of Tohir Yuldoshev where he tells of his encounters with Osama bin Laden.

³⁴ 'O'zbekiston Islomiy Harakatining oxirgi Qirgiziston voqalariga bag'ishlangan bayonoti' [Statement from the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) regarding the latest events in Kyrgyzstan], 15 June 2010.

population and use its influence to preserve the caliphate as a unifying institution for the *umma*.³⁵ In 1920 the committee published the Khilafat Manifesto, which called upon the British government to maintain the caliphate and for Indian Muslims to hold London accountable for this purpose. As a result, civil unrest spread across the subcontinent. The Indian Khilafat Movement died out when Mustafa Kemal abolished the caliphate in 1924 and established a secular Turkish republic.

After the end of the Second World War the ideology of Caliphatism was revived by Taqi al-din al-Nabhani, an Islamic scholar of Palestinian origin and founder of Hizb ut-Tahrir. Al-Nabhani viewed nationalism as a Western innovation, which was designed to divide the *umma*; he therefore called for the re-establishment of the caliphate. Hizb ut-Tahrir is by no means the only Islamist group with such an objective. In fact, there is a whole Neo-Caliphatist movement consisting of a plethora of groups, including, among others, al-Muhajiroun and al-Qaeda. In contrast to the India-based Khilafat Committee's campaign for the preservation of the Ottoman caliphate, this Neo-Caliphatist movement has envisioned the establishment of a universal Islamic state not embedded in any particular territory.

Since its establishment the IMU has sought to advance its cause using military means. At the beginning the primary field of contention for the IMU was the Uzbek state; its understanding of *jihad* was therefore state centred. The relocation of the IMU from Afghanistan to Pakistan led to the endorsement of an internationalized *jihad*. This expanded struggle is more than just an objective; it is presented as a religious duty to carry out a God-given mission. Therefore the group presents its campaign as part of a battle between good and evil, romanticizing the Mujahideen who have fought against all odds:

When a *mujahid* stands on a mountaintop with a Kalashnikov—America, Europe, NATO, the Russians, and China all fear him. These infidels have atom bombs, planes, Sputnik—they've got it all—yet they fear this *mujahid*, because he is the servant of Allah, not of the dollar, the euro, or the riyal. He is the servant of Allah, and he fears no one but Allah.

Excerpts from a video clip of Tohir Yuldotshev where he tells of his encounters with Osama bin Laden

³⁵ On the All-India Khilafat Committee see Naeem Qureshi, *Pan-Islam in British India Politics: A Study of the Khilafat Movement, 1918–1924*, Boston: Brill, 1999.

Also, the IMU has envisioned a new world order—a *pax Islamica*. The group does not hide its absolutist and maximalist aims; it advocates the spread of Islam until it conquers the entire world: ‘For us Jihad is not the specific cause of Afghan or Chechen or Palestine; we are Allah’s warriors, and we will fight until the only religion in the world is Islam or until we become martyrs. To get rid of fighting with us either our enemies will convert to Islam and become our brothers or they will get smaller [in numbers] and pay jizya tax or they keep on fighting.’³⁶

Like other Islamists, IMU members believe in the moral superiority of Islam over the West. According to a statement posted on the IMU’s website, ‘although unbelievers present themselves as peaceful and us like barbarian warriors who hate peace, we have been sacrificed for peace. Only Islam can bring peace and quietness to people’.³⁷ By establishing a normative environment which values sacrifice for the sake of humanity the IMU hopes to motivate individuals to join the global *jihad*.

Yet the IMU does not have a broad support base in the region. Indeed, its new orientation has decreased its popularity among Central Asian Muslims, who now tend to view the group as ‘foreign’ or ‘Arabic’.³⁸ Moreover, the group has faced strong competition from Hizb ut-Tahrir at least in parts of Central Asia. The strategies of Hizb ut-Tahrir and the IMU are fundamentally different. On the one hand, the IMU has launched terrorist attacks against targets in Central Asia, Afghanistan and Pakistan aimed at physical destruction. On the other hand, Hizb ut-Tahrir is fighting a war for hearts and minds. In fact, IMU documents discovered after the overthrow of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan revealed that the IMU’s leadership criticized Hizb ut-Tahrir’s peaceful tactics.³⁹ More specifically, the group disapproved of Hizb ut-Tahrir’s claim that *jihad* is an activity that can only be legitimately promulgated by a caliph and thus cannot be supported until such time as the caliphate is re-established. Conversely, Hizb ut-Tahrir’s leader-

³⁶ Interview with Turkish Islamic Jihad Union Fighter Abu Yasir Al-Turki, 14 April 2008, available at <http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/FeaturedDocs/nefajjuelturki0408.pdf>, accessed 1 March 2011.

³⁷ ‘Mujojidlar Xitobi’ [The Mujahideen’s destiny], available at <http://furqon.com/Maqolalar/mujohidlar%20xitobi.h>, accessed 23 March 2011.

³⁸ Personal communication with two Uzbek dissidents, names withheld at their request, Moscow, April 2010.

³⁹ International Crisis Group, *Radical Islam in Central Asia: Responding to Hizb ut-Tahrir*, Osh: ICG Asia, 2003, p. 31.

ship criticized the Taliban—and implicitly the IMU—for their conceptualization of what an Islamic state is; Hizb ut-Tahrir implied that the two groups had not conducted adequate research and study on the issue.⁴⁰

CONCLUSION

The IMU is part of a Neo-Caliphathist movement that has emerged since the end of the Second World War. Indeed, many groups have campaigned for the restoration of the caliphate, and from this aspect the IMU hardly has a unique political agenda. What differentiates this group from other Islamist groups is its transition from local to global jihadism. Indeed, the group leadership has joined a global jihadi project to spread Islam worldwide; it therefore tends to de-emphasize the notion of homeland in favour of a de-territorialized *umma*. The establishment of an Islamist state in Uzbekistan is no longer the endgame; instead, the IMU's members have perceived themselves as a vanguard of the jihadi movement which fights for the self-determination of the 'Islamic nation'. Although its conceptualization of the proposed caliphate is rather weak, the IMU has been fully committed to the pursuit of this goal. However, the ideological transformation was the outcome of the IMU's migration to Pakistan, where it found itself isolated and marginalized.

⁴⁰ Mahan Abedin, 'Inside Hizb ut-Tahrir: An Interview with Jalaluddin Patel, Leader of the Hizb ut-Tahrir in the UK', *The Jamestown Foundation Terrorism Monitor: In-Depth Analysis of the War on Terror*, 2, 8, 2004, available at http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=284, accessed 3 January 2011.

THE CALIPHATE IN THE WEST

THE DIASPORA AND THE NEW MUSLIMS

Reza Pankhurst

*The world that resulted from the tragic elimination of the Khalifate was a cluster of separated nations each with its own flag, constitution and central bank. None of these realities are acceptable in Islam.*¹

While the caliphate appeared to briefly enter the lexicon of the US Republican administration under George Bush Jr, arguably more for its negative resonance among the American public than for strategic concerns, it appears to have positive resonance among a substantial number of Muslims across various countries and regions. Research supported by the United States Department of Homeland Security conducted in 2007 found that an average of 71 per cent of those interviewed across four Muslim countries (Egypt, Morocco, Indonesia and Pakistan) agreed with the goal of requiring ‘strict application of *Sharia* law in every Islamic country’, with 39 per cent agreeing strongly, while 65 per cent agreed with the goal of unifying ‘all Islamic countries into a single state or Caliphate’ in line with a classical

¹ Umar Ibrahim Vadillo, *The Esoteric Deviation in Islam*, Cape Town: Madinah Press, 2003, p. 57.

orthodox Islamic position that holds that there should be a single ruler for the Muslim community. At the same time, the same research found that 74 per cent wanted 'to keep Western values out of Islamic countries', and yet 75 per cent held positive views of globalization while 67 per cent believed that 'a democratic political system' was a good thing,² which raises questions about what the respondents understood by 'caliphate', 'democracy', and '*shari'a*'.³ Other research in 2006 which covered ten Muslim countries found that 79 per cent wanted *shari'a* incorporated as a source of legislation, while majorities in Egypt, Pakistan, Jordan, and Bangladesh wanted it as the 'only source' of legislation;⁴ in other words, what would be referred to as an Islamic state. A majority of African Muslims in ten of fifteen sub-Saharan countries polled in 2009 believed that they would see the re-establishment of a caliphate within their lifetime, while majorities in twelve countries favoured making *shari'a* law the law of the land.⁵ Since the opening up of the public space for political discourse in the wake of the Middle East uprisings that began in early 2011, numerous Islamic scholars from Algeria to Egypt to Yemen have talked about the re-establishment of a caliphate in front of massed crowds and on satellite TV.

A look at the countries surveyed shows the resonance of the idea of *shari'a* based governance, political unity, and belief in the caliphate beyond the Middle East to countries such as Pakistan and Indonesia in Asia to North African Morocco and down to sub-Saharan Mozambique. Accordingly it would be not be unusual for many groups beyond the Arab Middle East to lay claim to or proclaim their goal of establishing a caliphate as being a fundamental part of their programme. At the same time, there are also groups either emerging from, or primarily based in, the West that have adopted the same call.

A subsequent blend of the crisis of Islamic authority within Sunni Islam that was set off by the removal of the caliph and the lack of legitimacy of

² WorldPublicOpinion.org, 'Muslim Public Opinion on US Policy, Attacks on Civilians and Al-Qaeda' (Washington: The Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland, 2007).

³ Reza Pankhurst, 'Muslim contestations over religion and the state in the Middle East' *Political Theology* 11, no. 6 (2010): 826–45.

⁴ Dalia Mogahed, 'Special Report: Muslim World—Islam and Democracy' (Washington: The Gallup Center for Muslim Studies, 2006).

⁵ Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, 'Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa' (Washington, 2010).

the artificially imposed nation-states across the region and beyond provides fertile ground for the emergence of individuals and movements who coalesce around the pivotal idea of a caliphate in an attempt to re-establish that authority. This vacuum of authority is not geographically restricted, since the Sunni caliphate has always been held as the ultimate authority for Muslims irrespective of where they reside. Although the coercive political authority of the state was always limited to the areas under its control, the inclusion of the caliph's name in the weekly Friday sermon in Muslim communities outside the borders of the caliphate historically engendered a sense of unity and belonging throughout the Muslim world.⁶ The disappearance of this symbol of political unity and sense of belonging to a wider community, and the inability of the nation-state to provide an alternative that fulfils the same function, led to the emergence of numerous individuals and movements in areas that were not governed by the Ottoman state before its dissolution but for which, even so, the concept of the caliphate and its reinstatement is of central importance, including areas within the West.

To give an overview of these other, smaller, lesser-known movements based or originating primarily in the West, and to examine their nature and the differing role the caliphate plays in their alternative opinions and *ijtihad* in a comparative fashion, groups will be looked at from two different areas highlighting the different parts of the Islamic community in the West. The first of the groups considered is the Jama'ah-tul-Muslimeen, led by Dr Mohammad al-Rifaa'e, a Jordanian veteran of the Afghanistan war resident in the UK, whose membership is largely but not exclusively within the Muslim diaspora in the West. The second group is the Murabitun, a contemporary movement based around a Sufi order headed by the Muslim convert Abdul-Qadir as-Sufi, alternatively known as Ian Dallas, who founded the original community in Norwich, after which it spread as far afield as Spain, Mexico, and Indonesia, while its current headquarters are in South Africa. The majority of the members of this group are Muslim converts from various backgrounds and ethnicities.

These organizations come from an important area with growing influence: movements emerging from within the growing Muslim communities

⁶ Elizabeth Lambourn, 'Khutba and Muslim Networks in the Indian Ocean—Timurid and Ottoman Engagements,' in *The Growth of Non-Western Cities: Primary and Secondary Urban Networking, C. 900–1900*, ed. Kenneth Hall (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group (in press), p. 1.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

in the West, both indigenous and immigrant. By examining these two different groups which represent specific elements of Muslim communities beyond the Middle East, it becomes clear that they have very different ideas about the causes of the dilemmas of Muslims worldwide and how to improve their situation, and yet at the same time there is a commonality between them. The continuing lack of connection to the nation-state along with its perceived lack of legitimacy, and the absence of any meaningful authority within which Sunni Islam can anchor itself globally since the abolition of the caliphate, have meant that these groups' primary objective is the establishment of the kind of unifying symbol that could engender a sense of Muslim belonging in a community anywhere, whether under the authority of their temporal leader or not, and in its absence each has sought to invest that authority in different ways in anticipation of its return.

THE JAMA'AH-TUL-MUSLIMEEN AND THEIR QURAYSHI CALIPH

In the early 1990s, which saw movements in Asia set up to call for the caliphate, such as Dr Israr Ahmad's announcement of the establishment of Tahreek-e-Khilafat in Karachi to call for the caliphate in Pakistan, a certain Dr Mohammad al-Rifaa'e was already being anointed as the caliph himself. It is claimed that Dr al-Rifaa'e, originally from Jordan and tracing his lineage directly to the Qurayshi tribe of the Prophet, left for Afghanistan in the 1980s to participate in the *jihad* against the Soviet Union. Upon his return to Jordan he took part in several protests against the First Gulf War in 1990, and was expelled by the Muslim Brotherhood because of his 'radical' opinions before being arrested and held in detention by the Jordanian regime.⁷ As a result of the infighting in Afghanistan, along with constant harassment from the Jordanian regime, Dr al-Rifaa'e sought asylum in the United Kingdom in 1991.

After he settled in England, a number of people from abroad referred to as 'a group of *muhajirin* and *Ansar*'—a reference to the emigrants and supporters who initially gave their pledge of allegiance to the Prophet Muhammad—gathered together 'to support Islam'. This was through the 're-establishment of unity ... under the authority of one Imam' by giving

⁷ al-Mustaqbal, 'Itiqal al-Islami al-Urdani "Abu Humam" fi Britaniyya', 16 February 2006, <http://www.almustaqbal.com/stories.aspx?StoryID=164649>

their pledge to Dr al-Rifaa'e.⁸ According to the account of the event by the group itself, initially Dr al-Rifaa'e categorically refused their proposal, but he was persuaded to accept their pledge to him 'after a great deal of deliberation and dialogue'. It is also claimed that the majority of those who have given the pledge of allegiance to him came from abroad, and that his followers are based in about forty different countries.⁹

The group of followers refer to themselves as Jama'ah-tul-Muslimeen, literally meaning 'the group of Muslims'. This name has been derived from various Prophetic narrations which refer to this grouping, specifically one instructing that during an era of evil the believer must 'stick to the main body of Muslims (*jama'at al-muslimin*) and their leader'.¹⁰ Classical Islamic scholarship has traditionally understood this expression as referring to the united political entity of the Muslims under the leadership of the caliph or local sultan,¹¹ but it has been used by numerous contemporary movements to proclaim themselves as the central Muslim community at the current time and ask individuals to come forward and pledge their allegiance to their leader.

The group to use the most similar name in the last fifty years is the Jamaat-ul-Muslimeen of Pakistan. This group was established in the 1960s by Masood Ahmed and is currently headed by Mohammad Ishtiaq, based in Karachi. It promotes a return to *ijtihad* from the original sources of the Qur'an and *sunna* (traditions of the Prophet), but unlike other more mainstream movements it considers reliance upon any part of traditional Islamic jurisprudence as articulated by the major orthodox Sunni schools of thought as being an innovation, making it an extreme strand of contemporary Salafi-influenced thinking.¹² At the same time, it believes that the command to adhere to the pledge of allegiance is applicable to any leader even

⁸ Shaykh Abu Ayub al-Barqawi, *A Return to the System of Khilafah*, n.d., p. 3., available at http://www.unifiedummah.com/sections/books/books/The_Return_To_The_System_Of_Khilafah.pdf

⁹ UnifiedUmmah.com, 'About Us', <http://www.unifiedummah.com/aboutus.htm>.

¹⁰ Abul Husain 'Asakir-ud-Din Muslim, *Sahih Muslim*, Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1998, narration 1847.

¹¹ See for example Ahmad bin 'Ali ibn Hajr al-Askalani, *Fath al-Bari*, Riyadh: Dar Ibn-Hazm, 1998, narration 7084.

¹² Alternatively known as Wahhabism, the core concept of modern Salafi thought is to encourage a return to the sources of Islam and to purify beliefs and practices from innovation.

without a government or authority,¹³ and that their leader has been given such a pledge by his followers in order to facilitate ‘the expansion of Islam to all corners of the globe’, while it is now binding upon the rest of the Muslims to follow. They then consider that anyone who refuses to give the pledge or who leaves the group has fallen into disbelief and heresy,¹⁴ justifying their position by using a text declaring that the one who dies without a pledge of allegiance upon his neck dies an un-Islamic death.¹⁵

In terms of the fundamental idea and core justification around its concept of the pledge of allegiance, the UK-based Jama‘ah appears to be virtually identical to the Pakistani Jamaat, which could be because Dr al-Rifaa‘e had previously spent enough time in the region to come across and be influenced by their arguments—something quite likely as they both represent strands of Salafi thought, the major exception being perhaps that the Jama‘ah is not as rigorous in excommunication of Muslims who remain outside the ‘authority’ of its pledge. Both groups are concerned with promoting a pure Islam, and vigorously attack what they see as innovations in matters of belief and religion, and both promote a return to a direct interpretation of the Qur‘an rather than reliance upon any of the traditional Islamic schools of thought.¹⁶

The difference between the two is that while the Pakistani Jamaat is primarily focused upon pointing out and criticizing the practice of *taqlid*—the practice of a Muslim deferring his opinion in any matter to an alternative authority either because of his own incapability to practise *ijtihad* or out of deference to the greater knowledge of the one he chooses to follow. This is widely practised across the Muslim world, and in particular the Indian subcontinent, since the prerequisite knowledge of the language and texts of Islam required to do *ijtihad* means that it is generally considered outside the remit of most people, particularly those who have little or no knowledge of Arabic. In the Indian subcontinent over the last half-century there have been many debates between the ‘Deobandi’ scholars, who consider it necessary to stick to one school of thought since its original scholars had more knowledge than contemporary ones, and the ‘*ahl al-hadith*’ who

¹³ Jamaat-ul-Muslimeen, ‘Baiyah of an Ameer without any Government’, available at <http://www.aljamaat.org/books/jamaatpamphlets/english/baiyah%20of%20an%20Ameer%20without%20a%20Government/index.html>.

¹⁴ Jamaat-ul-Muslimeen, ‘The Distinctive Features of Jamaat-ul-Muslimeen’, available at <http://www.aljamaat.org/jamaat-ul-muslimeen/features.htm>.

¹⁵ Muslim, *Sahih*, narration 1848.

¹⁶ al-Barqawi, *Return*, p. 6.

believe that such a practice is unnecessary and that Islamic opinions should be derived directly from the Qur'an and *sunna*. The Jamaat follows the second strand of thinking, asserting that whoever believes the words of an Islamic scholar to be the final authority on any matter has committed polytheism by making the words of mortal men equivalent to the words of God and His Prophet,¹⁷ and anyone who follows a school of thought has fallen into sectarianism. The role of the Jamaat and its leader is to provide a non-sectarian unified Muslim community, which refers directly back to the Qur'an and *sunna* rather than going through the intermediary of traditional juristic opinions.

While the Jamaat is therefore concerned about disunity due to following different schools of thought, the UK-based Jama'ah is more focused upon resolving political disunity, as a result of the experience of seeing the victors of the conflict against the Soviet Union, members of different groups with multiple leaders representing varying tribal and sectarian views, turn their guns on each other. Having seen the destruction of what was believed to be a chance to establish an Islamic state in Afghanistan, caused by a lack of a unified command prior to the victory over the communist regime of Dr Najibullah, the group believes that 'the cause of unity in Islam is not the existence of force and power', and that instead 'unity is a command in itself'. Therefore the 'command to unity' was a separate command, a prerequisite to establishing an Islamic state.¹⁸

This unity is a command from God for the Muslim *umma* to 'act as one body', with all its parts 'under the command of one control centre', which is the caliphate. This authority is a necessity at all times, since without it all Islamic rules relating to social interactions such as marriage and employment would become suspended. The argument that there needs to be power and authority in order to establish such a caliph or caliphate is considered to be a modernist interpretation that compares Islamic leadership to the leadership within a nation-state, which ceases to exist if the state ceases to exist, whereas Islamic leadership is 'not applied due to the existence of a State that tries to enforce it', but rather is a command in its own right.¹⁹

¹⁷ Jamaat-ul-Muslimeen, 'The Invitation to Haq', available at <http://www.aljamaat.org/jamaat-ul-muslimeen/invitationtohaq/index.html>.

¹⁸ UnifiedUmmah.com, 'A Call to Unify the Muslims upon the Islamic Method', available at <http://www.unifiedummah.com/sections/articles/data/ACallToUnifyTheMuslimUmmah.htm>.

¹⁹ Ibid.

According to internal sources, Dr al-Rifaa'e's supporters imposed the fulfilment of that command upon him, and he was accordingly proclaimed as the 'legitimate head of all Muslims' since taking the pledge in the early 1990s, with a duty now falling upon 'every sincere Muslim' to follow in pledging their allegiance to him and submit themselves to his authority.²⁰ An alternative view is given by an Egyptian Afghanistan veteran, Mustafa Hamed,²¹ in his online book chronicling the experience of the Arab contingent of Mujahideen in Afghanistan, where he states that a small group of Arabs gave their *bay'a* to one of their own who had proposed the idea and offered himself as caliph (identified simply as someone who had British citizenship or residency). The group then demanded that everyone else recognize him as their caliph, and embarked on a campaign of kidnapping and fighting against anyone who opposed them. The caliph was also supposed to have issued several strange rulings such as permission to deal in cannabis and the prohibition of paper money, but his followers were eventually run out of Afghanistan by the Taliban (who had refused to give their allegiance to the caliph).²² It is not clear which of the two accounts is true, but it is possible that the events as described by Hamed have been exaggerated since there is no clear source and his story seems to have been based around a mix of personal experience and hearsay.

By claiming the position of caliph or leader of the global Muslim *umma* for themselves, the Jama'ah not only ignored the claim of the Pakistani Jamaat, which is perhaps understandable given that the Jamaat did not state that they were taking the position of caliph, but they also seemed unaware of the claims of Cameleddin Kaplin, who claimed the title for himself while residing in Germany after he split from the Turkish group Milli Gorus in 1983 and established his own group, Hilafet Devleti ('caliphate state').²³ Of course, if the two groups had been more aware of one another the outcome

²⁰ al-Barqawi, *Return*, p. 6.

²¹ More famously known as Abul Walid al-Masri, a prominent jihadi strategist, blogger, and author who is currently linked to the Taliban, and had a close relationship and communication with several members of al-Qaeda, though he claims never to have been a member himself.

²² Mustafa Hamed, *Saleeb fee Sama'i Kandahar*, n.d., available at <http://mafa.maktoob-blog.com>, p. 41.

²³ Werner Schifffauer, 'From Exile to Diaspora: The Development of Transnational Islam in Europe', in 'Aziz Azmah and Effie Fokas (eds), *Islam in Europe: Diversity, Identity and Influence*, Cambridge University Press, 2007; 68–95

might not have been pleasant, as evidenced by a previous conviction for incitement to murder against the current caliph Metin Kaplan (who inherited the position from his father); after the leader of a splinter group proclaimed himself as the rightful caliph, it was said that a *fatwa* from Kaplan was issued, based upon the words of the Prophet, ‘When a second Caliph challenges the first, kill the second of them,’²⁴ and for this he served four years in jail. (Kaplan is now serving a jail sentence in Turkey after being found guilty of an alleged plot involving aeroplanes being flown into the mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal.)

However, while there are similarities between the two movements beyond their respective claims to the caliphate, such as their mutual emphasis on puritanical views, which results in demarcating most other Muslims as traitors, Hilafet Devleti represents a reaction by the Turkish diaspora in Germany to the situation in their country of origin, and is focused more upon politics in the homeland.²⁵ On the other hand, the Jama’ah is more cosmopolitan and globally grounded, while at the same time, without a shared country of origin to serve as another identity for their members, much of their discourse relates either to the general state of the Muslims globally or to the position of Muslims in the UK where their caliph resides.

The most prominent issue addressed is voting in the British parliamentary elections, something which is directly related to their call for the establishment of a system of governance based upon the Islamic sources alone. While the Jama’ah holds the relatively common view that democracy is not compatible with Islam since it contradicts the sovereignty of God, their position goes further in that anyone who votes for a non-Islamic entity is automatically rendered an apostate—a position detailed in a piece of work released just after the 2005 elections, referring to the Respect Party which had been strongly canvassing Muslim votes in the Bethnal Green constituency.²⁶ Other issues include ‘unveiling’ what they consider to be the ‘British Establishment’s hatred of Islam’ by discussing the position of the government and media with respect to the choice of Muslim women to wear the veil, linking it to a series of Orientalist attacks to discredit ideas such as

²⁴ Joan Bakewell, ‘The Believers who Despise our Ways’, *New Statesman*, 29 May 2000.

²⁵ Schiffauer, ‘From Exile to Diaspora’.

²⁶ Abu Abdullah ibn Yousaf, ‘The World without the Shahada’, n.d., available at http://www.unifiedummah.com/sections/books/books/The_World_Without_The_Shahadah.pdf

polygamy, *jihad*, and the caliphate itself.²⁷ However, the majority of their literature is either decrying the disunity of the Muslims and urging them to fulfil their obligation by giving their allegiance to their caliph, or writing explanations and justifications for their own understanding of what the caliph and caliphate are.

While on paper the role of Dr al-Rifaa'e as the caliph or *amir al-mu'minin* (leader of the believers) is to 'spearhead the charge to demolish all man-made laws' which are contradictory to the Islamic *shari'a*, through abandoning all relationships with un-Islamic individuals, bodies, and organizations,²⁸ in reality his authority is restricted to his small group of followers. According to the Jama'ah, the pledge its members give is not simply a single obligatory act but is in fact 'the doorway to many obligations' and the direction given to 'the one who was previously without objectives and direction'. Joining the Jama'ah 'is not like joining a group' that people join 'and then leave and join another', since abandoning it is akin to abandoning the complete Islamic system. So while those 'ignorant of the laws of Allah' may consider the pledge as an isolated act, for the members of the group it is 'the way out of the darkness' and an intercession for themselves in front of God. At the same time, they are commanded to 'cling' to their leadership 'even if the Imam is oppressive' or 'if there is selfishness and unfair preferences'.²⁹ In other words, the Jama'ah is akin to a cult movement which demands complete submission from its members who form a distinct community, not by living in separate locations but through their obedience to their caliph and his appointed representatives—who have the right to resolve their issues and command them in their affairs, even though being a non-state entity they theoretically have no coercive capacity over those issues.

Consequently much of the group's literature is defensive in nature, justifying its position, putting forward arguments against possible opponents and alternative viewpoints, and giving comfort to its members by proclaiming themselves as a minority believing the truth.³⁰ This position is necessary

²⁷ Zayd Mustansir, 'Unveiling of the British Establishment's Hatred of Islam', available at <http://www.unifiedummah.com/sections/articles/data/Unveiling.html>.

²⁸ al-Barqawi, *Return*, pp. 6–7.

²⁹ Jama'ah-tul-Muslimeen, 'Does the Baya'ah of Obedience to the Imaam change the life of a Muslim?', n.d., available at http://www.unifiedummah.com/sections/articles/articles/Bayaah_Of_Obedience_To_The_Imaam.pdf

³⁰ Jama'ah-tul-Muslimeen, 'Possessing Large Numbers, Agreement with the Majority and Consent of the Masses is not the Scale to Judge the Truth', n.d., available at http://khilafah.com/systems/belief/aqeeqah/khilafah_6.html

because the group has fundamentally inverted the common understanding that having a caliphate necessitates having authority in the land, and instead calls for the establishment of the caliphate in order to then seek that authority.³¹ The Jama'ah criticizes groups working for the caliphate—by which they appear to mean primarily Hizb ut-Tahrir, according to the details they discuss—for adopting methodologies that contradict their objective, seeking the support of the army to establish a caliphate while the existing armies are considered disbelievers by the Jama'ah, owing to their support of the current un-Islamic regimes in place across the Muslim world. The common understanding that the caliph cannot be established without power is considered to be a 'grave error' and 'diseased thinking which is preventing the revival of Islam', whereas 'if all the groups were united behind one man then this would change everything'.³² Much of their discourse appears to be designed to discredit other ideas, and the tendency to place barricades around themselves is seen in numerous places, where they challenge others for proof that they were 'not allowed ... to be united in this present condition of weakness in which unity is most needed',³³ as they seek to justify their unorthodox ideas.

Although the Jama'ah appeared to be growing in the first few years after 9/11, the detention of their leader by the British security services in 2006, until he was granted bail in 2008 owing to his serious health problems, raised questions about their viability.³⁴ Given that the caliph was not only powerless and stateless, but had also become a captive, some of the group's members were confused as to what their status was. In response to this the group wrote a piece entitled 'The Continuation of *Imaarah* [leadership] in the Case of a Captive Imam', which stated that 'people should not spread panic when an Imam is captured nor should they despair', and rather than

³¹ Jama'ah-tul-Muslimeen, 'Allah did not Give us Permission to be Leaderless and Divided at any Time', n.d., available at http://khilaafah.com/systems/authority/khilafah_7.html

³² Jama'ah-tul-Muslimeen, 'Not Understanding the Shari'h Method of Unity is the Key to Failure and Misery', n.d., available at http://www.unifiedummah.com/sections/articles/articles/Key_To_Failure.pdf

³³ Jama'ah-tul-Muslimeen, 'A Challenge to the Muslim Groups, Parties, Scholars and Students Concerning the Illegitimacy of the Division of the Muslim Ummah', n.d., available at http://www.unifiedummah.com/sections/articles/articles/A_Challenge_To_Groups.pdf

³⁴ BBC, 'Second Terror Suspect Wins Bail', available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7392879.stm>; al-Mustaqbal, 'Tiqal al-Islami'.

telling people that ‘the *Imaamah* has ceased’ they must instead follow whichever leaders had been previously delegated authority by the caliph. The piece indicates that there was understandable internal turmoil at the time, and instructs the followers that they are obliged to refer all their matters to such delegated authorities, ensuring that the group’s leadership maintain their position over those who had given their allegiance to their Imam.³⁵ To bolster their position from an Islamic viewpoint, reference is made to classical texts that detail the conditions under which the captive Imam may continue to be obeyed, while ignoring that the same texts articulate the orthodox understanding of the caliph being the head of the Islamic state and authority in power. The fact that the group has continued with the same leadership since Dr al-Rifaa‘e’s release despite his reported poor physical and mental health further supports the impression that the group exhibits the same behaviour as a cult, with more junior leaders having a free rein to exercise whatever authority they believe they have without constraint, a wry parallel of the image of the impotent caliph who provides the religious justification for the authority of the sultan below him.

While the Jama‘ah has its similarities to the Jamaat of Pakistan and the Hilafet Devleti of Germany, it is not surprising that it is unique in its own right in being a group firmly based in the diaspora, led by an Arab refugee originally at the behest of veterans of the Afghanistan conflict, with individual members as far afield as Pakistan and Bangladesh (though as a movement it appears to be limited to south-east England), and claiming to be the global leadership for Muslims worldwide. Its influences are an eclectic mix of Salafi-influenced beliefs, the politics of movements seeking to establish an Islamic state, and the experience of its founding members seeing the collapse of what they had fought for in Afghanistan due to the disparate nature of the resistance, which had become more significant after the expulsion of the Soviets and the fall of the Communist-backed regime, leaving a vacuum of authority to be filled. The caliphs of London, Cologne, and Karachi are all reactions to the lack of a credible Islamic authority around which the disparate communities can unify, exacerbated by the lack of legitimacy of the nation-state in Muslim lands and the feeling of exclusion as minorities living as part of a Muslim diaspora.

³⁵ Jama‘ah-tul-Muslimeen, ‘The Continuation of Imaarah in the Case of a Captive Imam’, n.d., available at http://www.unifiedummah.com/sections/articles/articles/The_Continuation_Of_Imaarah_In_The_Case_Of_A_Captive_Imaam.pdf

THE CALIPHATE IN THE WEST
SHAYKH ABDAL-QADIR AS-SUFI
AND THE GOLD DINAR COMMUNITY

The growing rate of conversion to Islam taking place in Europe and the United States means that many Muslims living in the West are not minorities or a diaspora in the ethnic sense of the word. From among them individuals and movements have emerged who proclaim their loyalty to a global Muslim *umma*, and yet their roots and lineage are firmly from places such as the American Mid-West, middle England, or the Scottish provinces. The most prominent of these is the global movement known as the Murabitun, led by Shaykh Abdal-Qadir as-Sufi, a Scotsman from Ayr born Ian Dallas in 1930. Their ultimate aim is the destruction of the global capitalist banking system and the re-establishment of the caliphate, to be achieved through the creation of Islamic trading communities across the world which would undermine the current world order and naturally lead to the emergence of Islamic rule. They claim to have more than twenty established communities as far afield as England, Mexico, South Africa, Indonesia, and Russia³⁶ with an estimated 10,000 followers worldwide,³⁷ and have minted their own gold dinar currency as part of the 'World Islamic Mint' organization, most recently in Indonesia³⁸ and Malaysia.³⁹ As Nils Bubandt rightly points out, the Murabitun represent another example that defies attempts at categorization by academics such as Olivier Roy, whose view of Western movements claiming radical protest of an internationalist nature is limited to either secular forms of sub-politics or Islamist terror.⁴⁰ This raises the question of what such analysts would make of the group whose followers are often whiter, better educated, and much more fluent in Arabic, Islamic theology, and political philosophy than themselves—given their own view of modernity and secularism (normally of the French variety) as the most enlightened idea to which the Muslim peoples have not yet evolved, while Western

³⁶ The Murabit blog, 'Biography of the Shaykh', available at <http://murabitblog.wordpress.com/2010/02/13/biography-of-the-shaykh/>.

³⁷ Barney Henderson, 'Radical Muslim leader has past in Swinging London', *Daily Telegraph*, 20 February 2010.

³⁸ al-Arabiyya, 'Muslims Shun "Worthless" Paper Money', available at <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2010/02/20/100913.html>.

³⁹ Abdal Hasid Castineira, 'Statement on the Shariah Currency and Legal Tender', available at <http://www.muslimsofnorwich.org.uk/?p=901>.

⁴⁰ Nils Bubandt, 'Sacred Money and Islamic Freedom in a Global Sufi Order', *Social Analysis*, 53, 1 (Spring 2009), 103–122.

converts to Islam are only rebels looking for a cause that has nothing to do with theology.⁴¹

Originally from a landowning clan in Ayr, before embracing Islam while in Morocco in 1967 Ian Dallas had achieved success and recognition as an author and playwright while based in London. His circle of acquaintances included musicians such as Eric Clapton and George Harrison, the American playwright and left-wing political activist Lillian Hellman, and the Scottish psychiatrist R.D. Laing.⁴² After his conversion he became a follower of a Sufi scholar, Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Habib, who was a leader of the Darqawi *tariqa*⁴³ (a position now held by Abdal-Qadir himself) before returning to the UK, where he decided to create an Islamic group with the intention of bringing forth the example of a communal rather than personal Islamic model. This initial small group of converts to Islam included figures such as the Bewleys, who have become established authorities within Islamic circles for the translation work they did at the behest of Shaykh Abdal-Qadir.⁴⁴

The first community, created in 1976, was set up near Norwich with the initial intention of being a self-sufficient farming village completely separate from the British state system, but after failing to become self-supporting, it eventually moved into Norwich itself. Another community was established in Arizona in the United States in the late 1970s, with others being set up in Cordoba and Granada in Spain. The spread of these communities from the heartland of the West to places as far afield as Mexico and Russia, often established with indigenous converts, also represents an evolution of the movement into an ambitious project for a global Islamic revival.⁴⁵ These communities serve a dual purpose as a symbolic rejection of their previous way of life and as the beginning of the hoped-for Islamic revival, and may be

⁴¹ 'Now only two Western movements of radical protest claim to be 'internationalist': the anti-globalization movement and the radical Islamists. To convert to Islam today is a way for a European rebel to find a cause; it has little to do with theology' Olivier Roy, 'EuroIslam: The Jihad Within?', *The National Interest* (Spring 2003), 63–74.

⁴² Robert Luongo, 'Radical Muslim Leader has Bohemian Past', available at <http://robertluongo.blogspot.com/2010/06/radical-muslim-leader-has-bohemian-past.html>.

⁴³ A Sufi *tariqa* is a religious order, in which the head of the order is the guide for those who pledge allegiance to him as the head of the order, and responsible for their spiritual development.

⁴⁴ Murabit Blog, 'Biography of the Shaykh'.

⁴⁵ Bubandt, 'Sacred Money and Islamic Freedom', p. 106.

considered somewhat similar to certain aspects of the programmes of some anti-globalization movements such as eco-socialism, which seeks the establishment of self-sufficient communities through a 'commons' system. Additionally, in recent years Abdal-Qadir has also been involved in the setting up of the Dallas College in Cape Town, South Africa, where he now resides. The institution is an effort at creating what the movement calls a 'post-*madrasa*' education system capable of equipping Muslims for 'leadership in the modern world', covering subjects such as political philosophy and Shakespearian rhetoric, with plans to establish a secondary school as well.⁴⁶

Abdal-Qadir's early studies in North Africa led him to believe that the most correct way to return to the original teachings of Islam would be through adoption of the school of thought of Imam Malik. The Maliki school of thought was dominant during the period of Islamic Andalusia, and continues to be so in North and West Africa, and its founder, Imam Malik, was a resident of the first Islamic city-state of Medina who adopted the customs of its residents as a source of jurisprudence. Abdal-Qadir commissioned his followers to translate some of the key texts of the Maliki school such as *al-Muwatta* into English, and his re-reading of sections dealing with economic and commercial transactions in the early Islamic community, contrasting them with the contemporary situation, led some of his senior followers to call him the reviver of the Islamic religion in the modern era,⁴⁷ whose methodology will lead to the restoration of Islamic rule.

The Murabitun hold the caliphate to be an issue 'of primordial importance' and an individual obligation 'necessary for the completion of many obligatory acts' of the religion such as *jihad* and the collection of the *zakat* tax.⁴⁸ They believe that the cause of the decline and eventual destruction of the caliphate was the adoption of paper money by the Ottoman state and its involvement in interest-based transactions. In his book *The Return of the Khalifate* Abdal-Qadir identifies the beginning of the decline as the reform period of Sultan Mahmut II from 1839, when Islamic law was reduced to taxes upon non-Muslims and cattle. By 1842 paper money had been introduced, and the relationship between the debt economy and social engineer-

⁴⁶ Murabit Blog, 'Biography of the Shaykh'.

⁴⁷ Abdal-Haqq Bewley, 'The Recovery of True Islamic Fiqh', available at <http://web.archive.org/web/20080119022323/http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/ABewley/saq.html>.

⁴⁸ Abdal-Qadir as-Sufi, *The Return of the Khalifate*, Cape Town: Madinah Press, 1996, p. 99.

ing meant that loans were being tied to state reforms. The ruin of the Ottoman state was due to the banking institutions, 'which bled the Ottomans dry of finance'.⁴⁹ In the end, the caliphate did not fall 'to an enemy sword', nor to 'historical depassement by a higher civilization', but rather to 'unsurpassable, mathematically unmeetable usury-debt'. Consequently, political reform could not save the Ottoman state from the interest debt, and as a result 'the Islamic society that was the Osmani reality' gave way to 'feudalism and bourgeois Capitalism'.⁵⁰ The deposition of Sultan Abdülhamid II was 'in truth the end of the Khalifate' since after him 'the Osmani ruler was reduced to the condition of a constitutional monarch'.⁵¹

Since the introduction of a paper currency and the banking system are seen as the reasons for the decline and eventual destruction of the caliphate, capitalism is considered as the root problem in the world today. Abdal-Qadir detaches the ideology from the nations that uphold it, his ire being focused instead upon a nebulous global banking entity. Though placing the blame upon Freemasonry and other secretive movements is commonplace, for the Murabitun this is also a result of the repositioning of Islamic revival as emanating from the West and back into the Arab world. Islam, they say, is not in conflict with the United States itself, since 'the USA is today the most active zone of entries into Islam in the whole world'; rather the movement sees itself as being at war with disbelief, and therefore 'at war with Capitalism, its instruments, its institutions and its leadership'.⁵² Consequently 'it is the bankers themselves who must be seen as the enemy of the Muslim community',⁵³ while the state has been subjugated to external monetary forces, and therefore has no real connection to its citizens, who have the role of debtors. This stance allows the Western converts who make up the bulk of the intellectual leadership of the group to focus upon the propagation of their call within their home countries.

The foremost ideologue of the group, Umar Vadillo, is responsible for articulating most of the detailed theological works explaining the alternative Islamic currency; he states that Islam is the only force capable of resisting a

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 21.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 34.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 49.

⁵² Abdal-Qadir as-Sufi, 'The Dumb and the Blind', available at http://www.shaykhabdalqadir.com/content/articles/Art094_07062009.html.

⁵³ Abdal-Qadir as-Sufi, *Technique of the Coup de Banque*, Palma de Mallorca: Kutubia Mayurqa, 2000, p. 87.

rapidly developing world state, with 'the coming battle' being 'the Muslims versus the banks'.⁵⁴ The Murabitun are the 'most advanced front-line against Capitalism',⁵⁵ with their minting of the 'Islamic Gold Dinar' from Granada in Spain in 1992 heralded as the beginning of the end of the new world order. As it was the introduction of a paper currency and interest-based transactions that led to the destruction of the caliphate, its re-establishment is by the reintroduction of the *shari'a* currency of gold dinars and withdrawal from contemporary economic structures into independent trading communities, undermining the banking economy.

The Gold Dinar is considered to be critical for the revival, since according to their *ijtihad* it is the only permissible currency in which the *zakat* can be paid. It 'cannot be collected unless in the Islamic Gold dinar' and, according to Abdal-Qadir's reading of the Qur'anic verses regarding the tax, it 'must be taken (not given) under authority', which means that the establishment of a leadership becomes necessary. Accordingly, 'the minting of the Islamic dinar by a Muslim leader' and its collection 'by power' are considered to be 'the foundational event for the return of the Islamic Khalifate'.⁵⁶ The return of the caliphate is thus to be achieved by the establishment and growth of a grassroots movement which would undermine the global capitalist system by separating itself from it, as well as leading to the end of the modern state—which has been 'born from the fusion of government and banking',⁵⁷ with governance reduced to 'being nothing more than a political front for banking'⁵⁸—and the return of 'personal rule' in its place.

The caliphate is considered to be the highest form of authority, and is the opposite of the modern 'fiscal state', with power held personally by a monarch-like caliph figure—an idea promoted by Abdal-Qadir, who thinks that 'leadership and the capacity to lead is genetically inherited'. The caliphate is therefore a 'personal rule' but even so 'the opposite of dictatorship' since the caliph is to be 'surrounded by a collegiate group who command and fulfill command'.⁵⁹ Since 'it is not an autocracy' it could never be like the 'centralized state' that the modern state has become; rather, ruling is devolved to the local level of provincial leaders and governors.⁶⁰ In his book

⁵⁴ Vadillo, *The Esoteric Deviation*, p. 13.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 749.

⁵⁶ as-Sufi, *The Return of the Khalifate*, pp. 92–3.

⁵⁷ Vadillo, *The Esoteric Deviation*, p. 19.

⁵⁸ as-Sufi, *Technique of the Coup de Banque*, p. 53.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 83.

⁶⁰ Abdal-Qadir as-Sufi, *Sultaniyya*, Cape Town: Madinah Press, 2002, p. 118.

The Muslim Prince the image Abdal-Qadir paints of his hoped-for caliph is that of the benevolent monarch or the Orientalist portrait of the sultan's court, for whom it would be 'unthinkable' to 'visit a town or a village without a feast being laid out for the local people',⁶¹ and whose wives wield enormous power.

This affection for monarchy extends to the contemporary monarchs, so that while the Mubarak, Gaddafi, and al-Asad regimes are all labelled 'thug dynasties' with the 'inheriting sons' being 'ten times worse than their father', Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah is 'excellent' (though ill advised by the Saudi religious establishment, which the Murabitun consider heretical), while the Moroccan regime is the 'one surviving Muslim state',⁶² with King Muhammad VI served by the Sufi scholars from the mosque where Abdal-Qadir embraced Islam. It could be argued that Abdal-Qadir is partisan to monarchy because of his theological position, but his position also extends to the British monarchy, with the restoration of a powerful monarch, in place of a failed parliament, seen as the prelude to the spread of Islam in the UK.⁶³ The abolition of constitutionalism is paramount, as the 'abstract instrument of the Constitution' leads to power being invested 'in a structural system which was both totalitarian and voided of any moral imperatives' with 'humanism as its ideology and consumerism as its bitter reality', while the norm 'through all history in every place' had been 'government by a person',⁶⁴ the monarch, or preferably the 'Muslim Prince'.

The group considers its work to re-establish the caliphate as the most pressing issue facing the Muslims today, to the point that 'the ultimate answer to the person who enquires about the content of pork in the gelatine of a biscuit' is that he needs a caliph⁶⁵ (in order to resolve the dispute and ensure that the goods in the market are acceptable according to Islamic law). The Murabitun contrast this 'ultimate goal that unifies all Muslims' with the programmes of other movements, claiming that their vision is not based upon 'the romance of the past', but rather has 'a clear-cut programme

⁶¹ Abdal-Qadir as-Sufi, *The Muslim Prince*, Cape Town: Madinah Press, 2009, p. 37.

⁶² Abdal-Qadir as-Sufi, 'The Last Phase of Arab Shame', available at http://www.shaykhabdalqadir.com/content/articles/Art087_01012009.html.

⁶³ Abdal-Qadir as-Sufi, 'The Role of the Muslims of Britain', available at http://www.shaykhabdalqadir.com/content/articles/Art056_20022006.html.

⁶⁴ Abdal-Qadir as-Sufi, 'Democracy: The Terrible Truth', available at http://www.shaykhabdalqadir.com/content/articles/Art025_20112004.html.

⁶⁵ Vadillo, *The Esoteric Deviation*, p. 732.

of unity based on a common currency: the Islamic dinar' and through the 'emergence' of rulers (as a result of the 'emergence' of their communities, who naturally require leaders) rather than by 'mass election'.⁶⁶ Hasan al-Banna and the Muslim Brotherhood are criticized for believing in a caliphate that was 'elected by an Islamic league of Nations', who would be merely a 'constitutional monarch' while their 'pan-Islamism' was a 'United States of Islam, a union despite frontiers'.⁶⁷ The scholars emerging in the last fifty years under the banner of 'reform' were engaging in the 'islamisation of knowledge', which was in effect the 'islamisation of Capitalism', resulting in a shift in 'focus away from our Islamic model'.⁶⁸ As for fellow Sufis, one prominent head of a famous *tariqa*, Shaykh Nazim, is compared to 'Christian preachers' who make people 'submissive' by basically claiming that the return of the caliphate will be linked to the end of times and the emergence of an Imam sent by God⁶⁹ (statements that subsequently set off a round of online insults and rebuttals between the groups).⁷⁰

This attack on apologetics is not unique to the Murabitun among Islamic movements, though a particular point was made by Abdal-Haqq Bewley, who stated that the fact that his shaykh, Abdal-Qadir (and therefore by extension any other member of Murabitun who are Western converts), has 'emerged right from the heart of enemy territory [the West]' enables him 'to abandon the defensive mode adopted by so many Muslim scholars and, without mincing words, to take the battle right to the enemy'. However, the background of the head of the Darqawi *tariqa* also results in views at odds with what is considered mainstream Muslim opinion. Unlike the other movements, which all place importance on the issue of Palestine, he considers the Palestinians a 'self-degraded people' living in 'virulent anarchy' who only distract the Muslims 'from the vital and massive issues facing the *ummah*' such as 'the liberation of the sub-continent Muslims and the preservation of Uyghur culture and people from the pagan cruelty of China'.⁷¹ Instead of resistance against Israel, the Palestinians should have surrendered, which in Abdal-Qadir's opinion would have been the Islamic approach at

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 740.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 542.

⁶⁸ Abdal-Qadir as-Sufi, 'Tijara: The Islamic Trade Bloc', in *Sultaniyya*, p. 80.

⁶⁹ Vadillo, *The Esoteric Deviation*, pp. 448, 66.

⁷⁰ Gibril F. Haddad, 'Have you Eyes, Murabitun Brethren?', available at http://www.livingislam.org/o/hyem_e.html.

⁷¹ as-Sufi, 'The Last Phase of Arab Shame'.

the time, and through intermarriage the Palestinians would have demographically defeated the occupiers (a tactic he also encourages the Muslims in Britain to follow). Indeed, given their elevation of economic issues above all else, they consider that Dubai rather than Palestine is the real disaster of the Arab world.⁷²

The Murabitun express a unique and interesting combination of ideas that deserve a much more detailed discussion in their own right—a mix of traditional Islamic positions, Western-influenced philosophy, and classical books on political theory together with a longing for a return to the politics of the past projected from within a Western rather than Middle Eastern standpoint. The fact that many of them are well educated, white European converts means that their criticism of the capitalist ideology and democracy is uncompromising, and their advocacy of Islam is largely free from any apologetics. At the same time they appear to be full of contradictions, such as their claim to return to an authentic, pre-schools-of-thought Islam while they vociferously endorse the Maliki school. They oppose constitutionalism as un-Islamic, criticize al-Banna's vision of the caliph as a constitutional monarch, and yet adopt monarchy and hereditary rule as the alternative. The group's methodology is separatist in its attempts to set up authentic Islamic communities based around its concepts of 'Mosque and Market', as well as being virulently anti-assimilation, and yet it also calls for political engagement, for example advising Muslims in Britain to vote for and work within the Conservative Party at the last election, attributing 'energy, concern and high moral purpose' as well as 'eloquence and openness'⁷³ to its leader, David Cameron (a position subsequently withdrawn as a result of his position on Pakistan and Kashmir).⁷⁴ There is little doubt about the zeal of the group's leader and the members' commitment to their cause, as the number of their small communities around the world shows, but their sectarian positions and unusual—perhaps contradictory—politics, along with the question of the long-term viability of their small trading zones using gold-based currency, means that as a collective they remain a largely unknown quantity, often eyed with suspicion by other communities, though it is also clear that a number of them are respected

⁷² Abdal-Qadir as-Sufi, 'Launch of the Islamic World Currency', available at <http://www.shaykhabdalqadir.com/tv/NewWorldIslamicCurrency.html>.

⁷³ as-Sufi, 'The Role of the Muslims of Britain'.

⁷⁴ Abdal-Qadir as-Sufi, 'The Political Class in Crisis', available at http://www.shaykhabdalqadir.com/content/articles/Art110_31072010.html.

THE CALIPHATE IN THE WEST

and appreciated for their scholarship and contribution to Islamic knowledge within the West.

THE QUEST FOR LOST AUTHORITY

Both of the groups examined agree on the necessity of the caliphate and establishment of an Islamic polity that would implement Islam while serving as the unitary point of leadership for the Muslim *umma*, and they share the aspect of adopting the call in the absence of any legitimate Islamic political authority in the Arab world. Both are also adept at the use of modern media and the internet, each using it in different ways for different objectives. For example, Abdal-Qadir utilizes his online presence for the dual purpose of political commentary and the dispensing of advice to the elites and monarchies of the Middle East and beyond.

At the same time, there are other significant differences between them. On the issue of *ijtihad* opinions range from the Murabitun's wholesale adoption of the Maliki school at the expense of the legitimacy of others to the Jama'ah's doctrine of ignoring them all and calling for a return to the Qur'an and *sunna* directly. When it comes to interaction with society, Abdal-Qadir encourages Muslims to engage in the British political system, an act of unbelief according to the Jama'ah. The Murabitun believe that the caliphate should have power without a state structure comparable to that of the modern fiscal state, while the Jama'ah does not even consider power a condition for the caliphate to be established. At the same time, the groups also vary from a credal perspective, with the Salafi-inspired Jama'ah considering the acts and beliefs of Sufi orders such as those of the Darqawi to be innovations, while Abdal-Qadir declares the Saudi-inspired Salafi Wahhabi doctrine to be outside Islam altogether.

However, these differences do not prevent an exchange of ideas and positions on the caliphate issue, with the Jama'ah extensively quoting statements by 'Shaykh Abdul Qadir al Murabit' on how the 'Caliphate is not only fundamental to Islam, it is the necessary foundation of its power'.⁷⁵ The exchange, debate, and verification of ideas are clear, with the ideas of an older Pakistani group influencing others, who then elect a caliph in the

⁷⁵ Zayd Mustansir, 'The Only Legitimate Political System in Islam is Shari'ah Under One Leader', available at <http://www.unifiedummah.com/sections/articles/data/TheOnlyLegitimatePoliticalSystem.html>.

UK, whose subjects then reference a Sufi leader, who validates his own understanding by comparing it to that of the Muslim Brotherhood. What ties them all together is their belief that the caliphate is an Islamic obligation without which Islam has no extant reality.

Dr al-Rifaa'ë's election as caliph came in the wake of the fracturing of the Afghanistan resistance and the loss of leadership among the Arabs who had participated there and found themselves left without anywhere to return to. The Murabitun see the caliph through the prism of their rejection of the encroaching world state by a return to personal, provincial and community rule, authentic free trade, and the restoration of Islam in place of the religion of capitalism. Each of them reflects struggles against different elements of the modern state. For different reasons each of these groups lacks a connection to the nation-state, owing either to their existence in the diaspora or to disaffection with modernity and the nature of the state, and each posits itself as an authority in the absence of a unifying central anchor for Sunni Islam and the vacuum of religious and political authority in the heart of the Muslim Middle East. The pledge of allegiance given to Dr al-Rifaa'ë as caliph, and the devotion of the Murabitun followers to their shaykh, also given as a *bay'ä*, are different manifestations of the perceived need for the unifying symbol and executive authority that represented Islam and also acted as an anchor for the disparate factions living under it.

CALIPHATE IN THE MINDS AND PRACTICES OF YOUNG MUSLIMS IN THE NORTHERN CAUCASUS

Marat Shterin and Akhmet Yarlykapov

INTRODUCTION

In the popular imagination, contemporary evocations of the concept of the caliphate are commonly associated with the intention to build polities in opposition to the existing political order and its institutions. By implication, groups and movements that evoke this idea tend to be seen as politically subversive and potentially violent, with their members presented as abstract actors playing out ideological scripts written for them by ill-intended demagogues, rather than individuals in particular circumstances for whom ‘caliphate’ may represent a meaningful idea for a variety of reasons, political and otherwise.

With respect to the Northern Caucasus, it does not take much effort to see that the idea of a caliphate finds appeal mainly among those whose formative years fell during the latter days of the Soviet Union or immediately after its dissolution. In our view, this simple observation alone calls for avoiding depersonalized and non-contextualized approaches when analyzing projects associated with the caliphate. For our current purposes we approach the notion of the caliphate broadly as an aspiration, desire, or

utopian project to live in a polity governed by Islamic morality, ethics and laws in opposition to the existing social institutions, including political structures that are perceived as corrupt, immoral, and/or oppressive. In such visions society and state constitute a single inseparable entity, with *shari'a* law as its sole moral and legal foundation. From this perspective, the notion of caliphate is applicable to evocations of other Islamic polities, such as imamate and emirate, as partial, incomplete, or transitional manifestations of the ultimate Islamic state, the caliphate. Furthermore, historically, these constructions of ideal polities can be found within both Sunni and Shi'a thought, according to their different conceptions of the 'righteous succession' as either ruled by descendants of the Quraysh family—the 'big family' of the Prophet—in the Sunni tradition, or by direct descendants of Muhammad through the Commander of the Faithful 'Ali, according to the Shi'a tradition. Since the demise of the original Arab caliphate such constructions have served to 'explain' and justify the simultaneous rule of several caliphs in the politically divided Islamic world, most of whom saw themselves as *amirs*, or *amir al-mu'minins* ('Commanders of the Faithful'), in charge of emirates, the political building-blocks from which the united caliphate would eventually re-emerge and embrace the entire Muslim community (*umma*).¹

Many, if not most, political scientists have referred to the current invocation of the idea of the caliphate in the Northern Caucasian Islamic discourses as an alien import that was pragmatically used by violent radical separatists to legitimize their armed struggle against Russian domination.² While justified in some instances, this view overlooks at least two crucially

¹ Although this is beyond the scope of the current chapter, we note that approaching the notion of caliphate as a manifestation of the social utopian paradigm culturally defined by the broad Islamic tradition can make it sociologically comparable with the appeals and effects of other similar concepts in non-Islamic traditions. In particular, the studies of millenarian movements and thinking, or other forms social utopianism, for instance within Christianity or Judaism, that anticipate an end of the unjust world and the establishment of a divinely governed society would point to many 'family resemblances' with their Islamic counterparts, allowing useful comparisons and insights. See, for instance, John Hall, 'Apocalypse, History, and the Empire of Modernity', in M. Al-Rasheed and M. Shterin (eds), *Dying for Faith: Religiously Motivated Violence in the Contemporary World*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2009, 3–16.

² See, for instance, G. Hahn, *Russia's Islamic Threat*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007; G. Yemelianova, *Radical Islam in the Former Soviet Union*, London and New York: Routledge, 2010.

important considerations that we intend to elaborate in the following discussion. First, the caliphate as a political concept and, more broadly, as an ideal Islamic polity has for centuries been present in the popular memory and imagination of the peoples of the region. Second, and perhaps more important, this idea has been put to a variety of uses, and motivated a variety of actions, not all of which were necessarily intended as political, though they were nearly always politicized.

For our current purposes we suggest an analytical distinction between uses of the idea of a caliphate for constructing either social or political utopias. In the first instance it can represent attempts to create alternative communities of Muslims based on the ideal of Islamic morality and law but within the established social (including political) order, which implies various negotiations and accommodations with the existing social institutions over legitimacy of the Islamic alternatives. In another discussion we have introduced a notion of mediating social spaces to refer to this sense of accommodating social utopianism.³ In the political sense, however, some Islamic activists can evoke the concept of a caliphate as a challenge to the existing political order, which can be pursued through either legitimate political process or recourse to violence. These are, of course, two ‘ideal-typical’ constructs that can cover a range of actual situations; in fact, one of our current purposes is to observe how particular groups and movements have evolved from seeing the caliphate as a call for emulation of a social and moral ideal to embracing it as an appeal for and justification of political action.

In this discussion we will focus primarily on contemporary Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, and, only to some extent, Chechnya, where evocations of the idea of a caliphate have been particularly salient.

CALIPHATE AS AN IDEA AND POLITICS IN NORTHERN CAUCASIAN HISTORY

We can identify several waves of geopolitical change with which the idea of a caliphate has been introduced and persisted in the region (though we do not at all imply necessary historical continuity between different manifestations of this idea). It was originally introduced by the Arabs, who in 654 conquered the city of Derbent and made it one of the most prosperous

³ M. Shterin and A. Yarlykapov, ‘Reconsidering Radicalisation and Terrorism: The New Muslims Movement in Kabardino-Balkaria and its Path to Violence’, *Religion, State, and Society*, 39, 2/3 (2011), 303–26.

cities of their caliphate. After its collapse in the tenth century the city remained the centre of the Derbent Emirate that embraced the southern part of what is now Dagestan.⁴ This was followed, in the late fifteenth century, by inclusion of most of the Northern Caucasus in the Ottoman Empire, which was ruled by sultans who declared themselves righteous caliphs. The extent to which Caucasian Muslims came to see themselves as the caliph's subjects is evident in the fact that after the Russian victory over the Ottomans in the Caucasian War (1817–64) masses of them preferred to leave their homeland and resettle within the confines of the caliph's land.⁵

It was during the anti-colonial struggle of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that the idea of imamate and local imams as a form of geographically confined Islamic government was appropriated by anti-Russian resistance movements in the Northern Caucasus. This idea, however, was by no means universally embraced either in the region or elsewhere in the Islamic world, as the majority of contemporary Sunnis accepted the Ottoman sultans' claim to be caliphs. The differences became particularly clear when Imam Shamil (1797–1871) attempted to create an independent theocratic state (1834–59) in the territories of what are now Dagestan and Chechnya. Shamil declared himself *amir al-mu'minin*, which in the context of the time amounted to claiming the title of caliph, and announced armed *jihad* against the Russian infidel.⁶ As in the political context of the time this could be readily construed as challenging the sultan's exclusive claim to be caliph, Murtaza-Ali al-Urad, a *shari'a* judge (*kadi*; Arabic *qadi*), attempted to rationalize Shamil's claim by ruling that in every historical situation caliph and imam represented two legitimate and compatible types of authority. He further argued that in certain situations, when Muslims engage in *jihad* against infidels in different parts of the world several imams could be necessary to lead the struggle.⁷ There is little doubt that this inter-

⁴ See Frederik Coene, *The Caucasus: An Introduction*, Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, 2009, pp. 108–9; Enver Kisriev, *Islam i Vlast v Dagestane*, Moscow: O.G.I., 2004, pp. 18–20.

⁵ Andreas Kappeler, *The Russian Empire: A Multiethnic History*, London: Longman, 2001, pp. 179–85.

⁶ See Moshe Gammer, *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnia and Daghestan*, London: Frank Cass, 1994; and Anna Zelkina, *In Quest for God and Freedom: The Sufi Response to the Russian Advance in the North Caucasus*, London: C. Hurst & Co., 2000.

⁷ Michael Kemper, 'The Daghestani Legal Discourse on the Imamate', *Central Asian Survey*, 21, 3 (2002), 265–78.

pretation was designed to confer legitimacy on Shamil's armed struggle in a situation in which the ruling Ottoman sultan refused to proffer military support against the Russians. However, it failed to convince all Caucasian Muslims to join Shamil's cause, as many of them continued to doubt the legitimacy of his claim to equal status with the caliph, and, by implication, of his call to *jihad*. With Shamil's defeat and the subsequent Russian victory in the Caucasian War, the idea of a local imamate as a source of anti-imperial resistance persisted among Northern Caucasian Muslims, though it began to lose momentum with the emergence of secular nationalist and socialist movements in the region in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was revived briefly during the Russian civil war, when the Northern Caucasian Emirate was declared in Chechnya and Western Dagestan, but this only survived for five months, between September 1919 and March 1920.⁸

During the Soviet period the official state ideology and policies introduced new dimensions and, arguably, complicated ways in which local Muslims positioned themselves in relation to their religious affiliation, ethnic identity, and political loyalties.⁹ Following the official 'nationality policy' that promised to secure the 'flourishing' of all ethnic groups, new administrative formations were introduced, based on ethnic criteria, in the form of 'autonomous' republics and regions (such as Chechnya, Dagestan and Kabardino-Balkaria). While in reality preserving the tight political control of local societies by Moscow, this policy redefined power relations in the Northern Caucasus by enhancing the role of local political elites and their access to economic benefits. Furthermore, Soviet modernization provided opportunities for local people to access social and cultural resources available elsewhere in the Soviet Union, and ascribed to them another layer of identity as 'Soviet people'.

However, these Soviet policies and modernization involved a great deal of repression and violence, and had unintended consequences. The extermination of the local elites in the wake of the 1917 Bolshevik revolution and the mass deportations of Chechens, Balkars, and other ethnic groups

⁸ Uzun Haji, the emirate's leader, assumed the title of His Majesty Imam and Emir of the Northern Caucasian Emirate and Shaykh Uzun Khair Haji Khan.

⁹ Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*, pp. 370–94; Shireen Hunter, *Islam in Russia: The Politics of Identity and Security*, New York: M.R. Sharpe, 2004; Georgi Derluguian, *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus: A World-System Biography*, University of Chicago Press, 2005.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

during the Second World War (known in Russia as the Great Patriotic War, 1941–45) left indelible marks on local historical memories. The implementation of the Soviet nationality policy was fraught with inter-ethnic rivalry, as administrative boundaries were often drawn and redrawn arbitrarily, securing political control from Moscow, most notably in Dagestan where over thirty ethnic groups with different demographic and socio-economic characteristics found themselves in a single republic. Finally, the state-imposed atheism and secularism included an attempt to dissociate ethnic and religious identities, which in the Northern Caucasus meant anti-Islamic policies. Available evidence points to varying degrees of success of these policies across the region, from parts of Dagestan, Chechnya and Ingushetia, where Islamic beliefs, practices, and affiliations were preserved as both folk practices and affiliations within semi-official and underground Sufi brotherhoods, to North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessia and Adygeya, where Soviet secularism made deeper inroads. However, it is also clear that throughout the region the Soviet policy proved unsuccessful in eliminating Islam as a marker of identity of the majority of its peoples, and the ideal of an Islamic society retained its potential for inspiring and organizing resistance to domination and injustice, manifesting itself in Sufi brotherhoods in Chechnya, Ingushetia, and Dagestan.¹⁰ While the official Islamic organization, the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Northern Caucasus, was tightly controlled by the state, Sufi brotherhoods provided a sense of Islamic belonging and communal association. In late 1970s and 1980s new alternative ideas about an ‘authentic Islamic community’ began to emerge among young Dagestani intellectuals, most prominently Akhmad-Kadi Akhtaev (1942–98) and Bagauddin Kebedov (b. 1945).

THE APPEAL OF THE IDEA OF A CALIPHATE IN THE POST-SOVIET NORTHERN CAUCASUS

In this section we turn to the post-Soviet period, and attempt to identify the reasons for the appeal of the vision of an ideal Islamic society by focusing on ‘pushes’, or disappointments and frustrations with the existing social and political options, in particular among younger sections of the population, and ‘pulls’, or the attractions of alternative solutions.

¹⁰ Gammer, *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar*; Zelkina, *In Quest for God and Freedom*.

The economy and community

Most observers agree in their accounts of the dire economic situation in the post-Soviet Northern Caucasus, which has been marked by the collapse of many of its key industries and enterprises and extremely high unemployment rates, in particular among the young.¹¹ However, as Justin Gest points out in relation to Western Europe, while they contribute to disaffection and frustration, economic backwardness, relative poverty, and socio-economic inequality on their own do not necessarily lead to alienation from or rejection of the existing political order, provided that possibilities exist for challenging the status quo through the existing social institutions.¹² We suggest that it is the crisis of these institutions and their failure to accommodate aspirations and grievances among the younger post-Soviet generation that encouraged a search for alternatives among some of them. To clarify, here we refer to the crisis of social institutions rather than particular organizations, some of which (police, army, local authority etc.) can operate relatively efficiently.¹³ A brief look at the life world of young people will help better to understand the causes and manifestations of the crisis of social institutions in the Northern Caucasus.

In their formative years young Dagestanis, Kabardins, or Balkars are used to hearing the stories about ubiquitous corruption that has corroded every inch of the local social fabric. Every young person in Dagestan or Kabardino-Balkaria is aware of the size of bribes for—supposedly free—university education and internships, as well as for embarking on professional careers. They also know about the virtual impossibility of setting up their own legitimate businesses, unless they are willing to enter ethnically based networks that control economic activities: one can be a businessman only as a member of the ‘Dargin’, or ‘Avar’, or ‘Kumyk’ clan, not as an independent agent of economic activity. As we discuss further in this chapter, local political institutions, including the state, are also intersected with ethnic loyalties, and represent arenas of clan rivalry as well as bases of economic gain.¹⁴

¹¹ Mikhail Roshchin, ‘Dagestan’s Economic Crisis: Past, Present and Future’, *North Caucasus Analysis*, 7, 42, available at http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=32201, accessed 15 November, 2011.

¹² Justin Gest, *Apart: Alienated and Engaged Muslims in the West*, London: Hurst & Company, 2010, pp. 53–5.

¹³ Samuel Greene, ‘Priroda Nepodvizhnosti Rossiyskogo Obshchestva’, *Pro i Contra*, 15 (2011), 6–19.

¹⁴ See P. Baev, J. Koehler and C. Zurcher, ‘Ethnic Fractionalization and Stability in

It has to be noted that the malfunctioning of social institutions is not a unique feature of the Northern Caucasus, and can be found elsewhere in post-Soviet Russia; nor are ethnic ties as bases of economic activities and political loyalties unique to this region. The point here is that these ties and loyalties have become partial substitutes for the failure of modern social institutions to provide a sense of security, predictability, and authority. Rather than engaging with modern institutions young people in the region are pushed to accept the authority of, and act within, restrictive family and clan structures. It comes as no surprise that those who initially challenged this status quo have tended to be young people who had been through the Soviet education system with its thrust for the inculcation of modern (if ideologically biased) values and were increasingly involved with the globalized communication networks and discourses.

Delegitimization of the state

In his recent analysis, Samuel Greene links the crisis and underdevelopment of social institutions to the issues of state authority in post-communist Russia, which can be usefully extended to our current discussion.¹⁵ In particular, Greene employs Joel Migdal's conceptualization of the 'state in society', according to which the state can be best understood as arising from and created by particular societies and their institutions.¹⁶ Migdal points out that empirically observable states, far from being coherent social institutions that, through their monopoly on the legitimate use of force, have unique authority and power to shape other social institutions, hardly represent coherent structures. Rather, they tend to comprise groups of people bounded by particular interests and competing with other social groups and movements for authority and ways of governing people's behaviour, such as establishing rules and regulations, providing welfare, surveillance, etc. In competing for people's loyalties, social groups and the state or its fragments

Dagestan', in *Civil Wars in the Caucasus: Case Studies on the Economics and Politics of Civil Wars*, New Haven: World Bank Development Economics Research Group, 2002), 120–4. The authors emphasize the stabilizing effects of ethnic diversity that serves as an impediment to nationalism; however, they overlook the restrictive effects of the ethnic clan structure on the development of economic and social opportunities.

¹⁵ Greene, 2011.

¹⁶ Joel Migdal, *State in Society*, Cambridge University Press, 2001.

form various alliances, which ultimately configure distribution of power in particular societies and the adoption of policies that privilege some and disadvantage others.

Migdal's approach seems particularly useful for understanding the complexities of and multiple splits over political loyalties and interests in the Northern Caucasus and its constituent polities, such as Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Chechnya. The long history of imperial domination has caused divisions and ambiguities towards the Russian (and Soviet) state in its roles as both protector and suppressor, which have had a spillover effect on the perceptions of the local republican authorities, as they are—and are seen as—dependent on Moscow.¹⁷ Against this underlying uncertainty, ethnic affiliation and loyalty persist as the most reliable and predictable regulators and protectors that substitute for institutional mechanisms of modern societies and both intersect and compete with official state structures. To exacerbate the situation even further, the extremely complex ethnic composition of the region, compounded by a web of clan-based economic interests, causes internecine rivalries, greatly fuelled by the fact that access to power is at the same time access to substantial financial subsidies provided by the federal state. The republican elections in Dagestan in the post-Soviet decades have been marred by corruption, fraud, and violence.¹⁸

The wars in Chechnya (1994–96 and 1999–2000) have made a profound impact on the choice of loyalties that individuals and groups face, both inside the republic and in the entire region. While generally undermining the trust in Russian federal authorities, the devastation and destitution they have caused also increased the desire for protection and stability. On the anti-Russian side there have been multiple factions with different understandings of the liberation cause: while generally agreeing on what liberation was *from*, they diverged on what it was *for*. The external observer easily detects a certain evolution from the dominance of secular ethnic nationalism (led by Johar Dudaev) in the mid-1990s, to the emergence of the idea of pan-Caucasian, supra-ethnic, liberation (represented by Shamil Basaev) in the late 1990s, to the proliferation of Islamicized pan-Caucasianism (advocated by Anzor Astemirov and newly 'converted' Shamil Basaev and Movladi Udugov) in the early 2000s. However, rather than any of these

¹⁷ On the other factors in state formation in the Northern Caucasus see Derluigiuan, *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus*.

¹⁸ Kisriev, *Islam i Vlast v Dagestane*.

factions and ideologies eventually prevailing, the winner emerged in the shape of Ramzan Kadyrov (b. 1976), the defected-rebel-commander-turned-Chechen-president who forged a policy that accommodates a semi-autonomous but Kremlin-friendly rule and the enforcement of Islamic yet state-friendly practices. The opposition, on the other hand, is split between secular Chechen nationalists of the unrecognized Republic of Ichkeria and terrorist Islamism represented by leadership of the ‘Caucasian Emirate’ (discussed later in this chapter). This setting offers very limited legitimate options for those with aspirations to change their society and their lives.

Religion as a solution and source of legitimacy: the appeal of *shari‘a*

Many observers have pointed to the general resurgence of religion in the latter decades of the Soviet Union, in particular in the 1970s–80s, and after its collapse.¹⁹ In the immensely diverse space of the country this has manifested itself in a variety of different ways, and has been grafted onto a variety of cultural, social, and political issues, depending on the formative local traditions and social environment.²⁰

In the Northern Caucasus, apart from the militant Islamist ideologies, the appeal of religious solutions has been particularly salient in local public debates on how to deal with malfunctioning social institutions, with both those in positions of power and their opponents equally recognizing Islam as their shared heritage and a basis of morality and community.²¹ However, the variety of competing groups, movements, and parties in different parts of the region have also been referring to Islam to articulate their differences and often irreconcilable positions.

In Dagestan the image of a society based on the *shari‘a* law has been central in framing oppositional discourses in the press, at informal gatherings, and in particular through internet forums, where it is commonly

¹⁹ Statistics for Dagestan are particularly telling. In 2005 there were 1,766 mosques in the republic, which had a population of more than 2.5 million; around 13,000 of 15,000 of Russia’s Muslims who performed the *hajj* that year were from Dagestan; the incidence of Islamic educational establishments in Dagestan (thirteen Islamic high schools) is also the highest in Russia.

²⁰ See, for instance, Mark Steinberg and Catherine Wanner (eds), *Religion, Morality and Community in Post-Soviet Societies*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008; Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer (ed.), *Religion and Politics in Russia*, Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2010.

²¹ Kisriev, *Islam i Vlast v Dagestane*, pp. 45–71.

evoked as the basis for judging the social reality and for suggesting alternative visions. Those opposed to the republican authorities point to the contradiction between their official declarations of loyalty to Dagestan's Islamic heritage and culture, on the one hand, and the widespread corruption, crime and immorality, on the other.²² Observers tend to agree that this discourse has become dominant among more intellectually and politically inclined young people seeking solutions to what they see as the dire social situation. At many local academic conferences young doctoral candidates openly challenge Dagestani political elites by arguing that introduction of *shari'a* law would transform the republic into an economically thriving, socially just, and culturally vibrant place. One can hardly avoid the impression that the construction of the '*shari'a* state' has already begun in the heads of the aspiring Dagestani intellectual elite. These younger people are not deterred by the argument that there is no historical evidence of the viability and efficiency of *shari'a* law anywhere in the world, as in their eyes it is a universal law, a panacea for all contemporary social ills, and—crucially—perfectly compatible with modern life.

This type of *shari'a*-oriented milieu in the Northern Caucasus can be traced back to the 1970s and 1980s, and is primarily associated with the names of Akhmad-Kadi Akhtaev and Bagauddin Kebedov. As we have argued elsewhere this strand within Islam, often described as 'Salafism' (though practitioners themselves do not necessarily subscribe to this designation), is marked by its malleability to the local circumstances and the versatility of its possible association with a variety of local concerns and issues, providing bases for personal piety, communal living, and political action.²³ Enver Kisriev also talks about different social bases and intellectual styles of Salafism in Dagestan. Salafi ideas and pietistic styles can find appeal among both the relatively economically deprived and the prosperous in rural areas, as well as among the urban intelligentsia. It can also be seen as a justification for not engaging in economically wasteful local customs (such as gifts at burials and dowries) as well as legitimizing resistance to the clan-

²² Kisriev, *Islam i Vlast v Dagestane*; Ruslan Kurbanov, 'Urban and Rural Islam in the Caucasus: Modernisation versus Conservatism, *Religion, State and Society*, 39, 2/3 (2011), 347–66.

²³ On the modernist aspects of Salafism see Shterin and Yarlykapov, 'Reconsidering Radicalisation and Terrorism; and also Roel Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*, London: Hurst & Company, 2009.

based economy, seen as corrupt and un-Islamic, in favour of new forms of entrepreneurialism seen as stipulated by the Prophet's *sunna*.

In certain cases this type of Salafi discourse becomes socially embodied in autonomous communities (*jamaats*). These communities can be usefully conceptualized as mediating communities: that is, attempts to create spaces for social experimentation, in this case an environment enabling young people to engage in social practice and adhere to moral norms that they see as based on *shari'a*, irrespective of the views of established Islamic scholars (*'ulama'*) and other authorities, and in contrast—and often opposition—to the local custom. These '*halal*' norms, inspired by the 'fear of God', thus come to be seen as providing bases for creating alternatives to the dominant social order based on self-indulgence and corruption. While these projects appeal to the *shari'a* law rooted in pre-modern culture and society and can be opposed to modern 'liberalism', arguably they also represent attempts to change society through personal effort, and involve rationalizations that are consistent with modern social and political thinking, such as references to science and efficient organization. This version of Salafism is close to what was elaborated and advocated by Akhmad-Kadi Akhtaev and his al-Islamiya group before his tragic death in 1998.

Bagauddin Kebedov, on the other hand, developed a more radical version of Salafism; in 1989 he established the Islamic Jamaat, conceived as a community of resistance and, in certain circumstances, a base for a jihadi-style political movement. While Kebedov's radicalism made him a likely ally of Chechen militant separatists, their tactical alliance never materialized into a strong strategic commitment, even though Kebedov found refuge in Chechnya from persecution in Dagestan in 1997, at the time when some Chechen rebel leaders, such as Shamil Basaev (1965–2006) and Salman Raduyev (1967–2002), were looking for Islamist alternatives to their largely discredited ideology of extreme militant nationalism. For our purposes it is important to note that although the idea of a *shari'a*-based polity seemed to have a common appeal, the actual political boundaries proved a dividing issue: while ideologically supporting anti-Russian *jihad*, Kebedov had reservations about extending it to his native Dagestan.

Shari'a-based projects for social change in the Northern Caucasus are not limited to 'Salafi' groups. In Dagestan Sufi activists also refer to *shari'a* law as a basis for creating their *jamaats*, which they seek to make economically strong and independent from the clan-based socio-economic networks. However, like the Salafis, Sufi evocations of the ideal Islamic society vary, as does

their positioning vis-à-vis state structures and social institutions. Some of them, such as followers of Shaykh Tadjuddin of the Khasavyurt region (predominantly Avar ethnically) and some other brotherhoods, see the existing political authorities as un-Islamic and shun them in every possible way. As they reject violent means, avoidance becomes a form of political protest.²⁴

However, in contrast to the Soviet period, from the mid-1990s the most influential Dagestani brotherhoods (*tariqats*) are no longer in opposition to the political authorities, with both sides supporting each other in their struggle against the Salafis. While being instrumental in moral and communal resistance during the Soviet period, most Sufi shaykhs could not and did not seek to develop elaborate teachings justifying alternative social projects, focusing instead on ritualistic and mystical devotion as well as personal commitment by their followers, the *murids*. Crucially, however, the post-Soviet competition for followers resulted in increasing centralization of authority in the hands of a few shaykhs and their closest *murids*. Of particular significance, Said-Afandi al-Chirkawi (b. 1937) claims authority over all three Dagestani Sufi *tariqats* (Qadiriyya, Naqshbandiyya, and Shadhiliyya), further facilitating the Sufi alliance with the government, which prefers to deal with a single representative religious body rather than decentralized authorities.

Thus, no longer seeing themselves as encapsulated cells of the future ideal Islamic society, most Sufi *jamaats* are now inextricably interwoven into the Dagestani social fabric and closely connected to the official political and economic elites. However, contrary to the common view, ethnographic observations indicate that the shaykhs themselves do not tend to engage in political activism; rather it is their closest disciples (*murids*) who seek prominent social positions to influence decision making at all levels and in different areas of social life.²⁵ They make persistent efforts at increasing their

²⁴ According to Shamil Shikhaliev, a Dagestani academic and expert on Sufism, 'They [the Sufis] have minimized their involvement with the current regime, which is a form political protest too': interview conducted by Akhmet Yarlykapov, 11 September 2011.

²⁵ Ibid. See also D. Makarov, 'Nesostoyavsheysya vozrozhdeniye umerennogo islamizma v Dagestane', *Islam v sovremennom mire: unutrigosudarstvenny i mezhdunarodno-politichesky aspekt*, 7 (2007), 19–27; Akhmet Yarlykapov, 'The Radicalisation of Northern Caucasian Muslims', in Roland Dannreuther and Luke March (eds), *Russia and Islam: State, Society and Radicalism*, London and New York: Routledge, 2010, 137–54.

influence through creating and expanding networks of *murids*, many of whom already hold significant positions in business, government structures, academia, and mass media. In this sense, the Sufi leadership instrumentalizes the shaykhs' spiritual authority to present their efforts as Islamization of Dagestani society from within. In response, however, Salafis point out that there is already evidence of the inevitable erosion of the *shari'a* ideals by the involvement of Sufis in corrupt politics.

These controversies have contributed to an escalating polarization of socially active Muslims, with Salafis taking an increasingly radical oppositional stance and Sufi leaders siding with political elites, and using them to suppress their rivals. From the 1990s one way of delegitimizing active non-Sufi Muslims was to refer to them as 'Wahhabis', a catch-all label implying their alliance with the militant global *jihad*. While in the mid-1990s secular authorities and law-enforcement agencies kept a certain distance, and only occasionally engaged in anti-Wahhabi campaigns, the spiral of radicalization between the Sufis and Salafis, and the establishment of the Salafi *jamaat* in the Kadar Zone (discussed below), contributed to these campaigns becoming increasingly virulent, even violent. In 1999 a new republican law banned 'Wahhabism' and provided justification for the brutal suppression of Salafi leadership by Dagestani law-enforcement agencies.

In the subsequent decade of 'anti-Wahhabi' campaigns and internecine violence in the republic Salafis lost nearly all their intellectual, politically articulate leaders, such as Akhmad-Kadi Akhtaev. While their opponents see this as a victory, the loss of Salafi ideologues by no means diminished the appeal of the ideology. Rather, it contributed to the suppression of an intellectually inclined and politically motivated leadership and effectively drove Salafi activists underground, to the mountainous forests, and out to neighbouring Chechnya, where they were welcomed in militarized Islamist camps. This contributed to the emergence of a new generation of Salafi leaders who see violence as the only justifiable means of pursuing the Islamist cause, and their violence is indiscriminately directed against all state structures, in particular law-enforcement agencies. Moreover, the brutality of their actions escalates with their increasing disengagement from the local society and their geographical isolation. In the meantime the Dagestani authorities find themselves in a situation in which they no longer have possible partners among Salafis with whom they could engage in a negotiation process.

The proliferation of the ideas, discourses, and social groups associated with the *shari'a*-based visions of ideal society has created a socio-cultural

milieu within which social discontent could be articulated and channelled. In the remainder of the chapter we discuss the attempts to make these visions into social and political projects in the Northern Caucasus, in which the concept of the caliphate has been variously evoked.

DAGESTAN: ISLAMIC JAMAAT *IN THE KADAR ZONE*

The first attempt at establishing a *shari'a*-based Muslim community occurred in the 1990s in the Kadar Zone, a geographical area of Dagestan that comprises three large villages of Karamakhi, Chabanmakhi, and Kadar. Right from the beginning there were fundamental disagreements between the local Sufis and the Salafi followers of Bagauddin Kebedov on issues of faith and local politics, which at times spilled over into heated public arguments. However, up to a point the two communities found a mode of coexistence, even when the Salafis became dominant.

We suggest that the emergence of the Kadar *jamaat* can be best conceived as an attempt by the local youth to create a community within which they could take control of their own lives, although the precise form this attempt took was greatly influenced by Bagauddin Kebedov's radical version of Salafism. The typical socio-demographic profile of its members would readily defy explanations within the economic deprivation paradigm, as by the local standards these young people were by no means poor; for example, many owned lorries that they used successfully to sell potatoes, the main village produce. In fact, within a short period of time, the *jamaat* had managed considerably to improve the economic well-being and governance of the village.

However, whatever the *jamaat* managed to achieve, its viability was largely dependent on the ability of its authorities to find accommodation with the complex web of power structures that impinged on the local situation. While they initially found a degree of equilibrium with the local Sufis, their strong opposition to the Russian domination, local government, and Sufi networks contributed to the radicalization of their stance, which was further fuelled by their leadership connections to Bagauddin Kebedov. In turn, anything to do with Salafis, in particular Kebedov-inspired Salafis, was unacceptable to the alliance of the Sufi leadership and their supporters in the government; their anti-Wahhabi campaigns contributed to further polarization.²⁶

²⁶ Kisriev, *Islam i Vlast v Dagestane*, pp. 94–124 and 185–215; Makarov, 'Nesostoyavsheysya vozrozhdeniye umerennogo islamizma v Dagestane'.

On 11 August 1998 the Kadar Salafis declared ‘full *shari‘a* rule’, which implied abolition of the representatives of the Russian federal and Dagestani republican authorities, and the establishment of local self-governance. The new *shari‘a*-based local authority included an *amir*, a local young Salafi called Jarulla (Jarulla Rajbaddinov); an Islamic Council or *shura*; and a *shari‘a* court, *mahkama sharia*. Their declared aim was the creation of a *shari‘a*-based society, which they saw as incompatible with the authority of both Sufi shaykhs and a secular government. However, while creating this new *shari‘a*-based enclave, the new Salafi authorities stopped short of declaring a caliphate with a caliph or imam as its head—claiming, in keeping with the Salafi approach, that none of the *jamaat* members had achieved a degree of knowledge, piety, and experience to be qualified for that role.

Crucially, as an Islamic-based social entity, the Kadar *jamaat* could not possibly stay away from the regional geopolitics, particularly given the political uncertainties and chaos in neighbouring Chechnya. Despite Kebedov’s personal stance against spreading the Chechen *jihad* into Dagestan, his links with Chechen rebels and militant Salafis contributed to the internal divisions within the *jamaat* over the Chechen issue. Indeed, some Chechen separatist commanders saw the *jamaat* as friendly territory, and established training camps where its young members were exposed to more militant interpretations of Islam and instructions on waging guerrilla war. There is evidence to suggest that leaders of the Kadar *jamaat* were concerned about the involvement of Chechen *mujahidin* and sought to distance themselves from the most notorious figures, such as Shamil Basaev and Ibn al-Khattab (1969–2002), a Saudi guerrilla who had married a local Kadar woman. Perhaps it was that section of the *jamaat* leadership that eventually showed a willingness to negotiate with the Russian authorities.

The emergence of an independent Islamic enclave suspected of links with the Chechen militant rebels could not escape the attention of the Russian federal authorities. In September 1998 Sergei Stepashin, the Interior Minister, visited the Kadar Zone and struck a deal with the *jamaat*’s leaders, in which the federal government promised to accept a degree of autonomy of their communities, based on their faith, in exchange to their commitment to distance themselves from the Chechen *jihad* and relinquish any support for it. However, this agreement proved to be short-lived, partly because other factions within the Russian government and the military did not share Stepashin’s negotiating position. However, the invasion of Dagestan by Chechen and international militants supported by Dagestani Salafi exiles

in August 1999 undoubtedly played the most decisive role in turning the *jamaat's* fortunes.

Despite a lack of evidence, the Dagestani authorities and Sufi leadership accused the *jamaat* leaders of supporting the invasion. In September 1999 Russian federal troops launched a military operation against the Kadar *jamaat*, which resulted in its destruction and the death of many of its members. Some of those who survived formed a new, manifestly militant organization, Jamaat Shariat, while others fled to Chechnya where they joined the ranks of *mujahidin* fighting for a form of Islamic *shari'a* state: the Caucasian Emirate.

THE KABARDINO-BALKARIAN JAMAAT (KBJ)

The first *jamaats* in Kabardino-Balkaria appeared in the early 1990s in the southern region, mainly peopled by Balkars, as a form of self-organization among local young people who had rejected what they saw as morally corrupt local social customs and economic practices as well the dominance of the 'Soviet habits' and the 'folk Islam' in their families and communities. What started mainly as expressions of piety and outward symbols of belonging (such as beards and a dress code) began to change considerably from 1993 when Musa Mukozhev and Anzor Astemirov, the two future leaders of the KBJ, returned from a year of study at the Muhammad Al-Sa'ud University in Saudi Arabia. They founded the Islamic Centre of Kabardino-Balkaria (ICKB), whose purpose was to propagate what they saw as the 'pure' version of Islam and *shari'a* law as ways of reforming local society and, in the long run, uniting Muslims.²⁷ The New Muslims, as they were called, formed a *shari'a*-based community led by an *amir* who chaired a council of local *amirs* (leaders of the thirteen local *jamaats*) and imams. The most significant issues of faith and social life were discussed at the *shura*, a consultative body that represented all the *jamaats*; Musa Mukozhev was elected the first *amir* of Kabardino-Balkaria.

The introduction of this new community based on shared faith caused rifts within a small republic, which ran across its traditionally close-knit families, ethnic links, and clan-based ties. The *jamaat* members referred to

²⁷ For details see Shterin and Yarlykapov, 'Reconsidering Radicalisation and Terrorism'; and Alexander Zhukov, Kabardino-Balkaria: na puti k katastrofe, 2008, available at <http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/142989/#pre>.

those outside their community as Old Muslims, who were seen as practising 'ethnic' and 'corrupted' Islam and as compromised by their affiliation with the Spiritual Board of the Muslims of Kabardino-Balkaria (DUMKB), the official Islamic body that was closely linked to the republican government and political elites. Religious differences therefore extended to contrasting conceptions of authority, political loyalty, and social conformity. In turn, for the Old Muslims, members of the KBJ were 'Wahhabis' loyal to a version of Islam that was alien to the republic and its constituent ethnic groups.

The republican authorities were also concerned about the possible links between the New Muslims, Chechen rebels, and the global *jihad*. In order to prevent the perceived threat of extremism they introduced a range of measures, such as issuing secret instructions on 'combating terrorism and extremism' in the republic, setting up a special unit within the local Ministry of the Interior to deal with 'extremists', and detaining a number of New Muslims on allegations of 'extremist activity'. We have argued elsewhere that while the official concern about extremist views of some New Muslims was justified, targeting the *jamaat* as a uniform militant jihadi group was based on a misattribution of the extremist ideology, dubbed 'Wahhabi', to the entire movement, and helped trigger a 'deviancy amplification spiral' in which the opposing sides became engaged in increasing mutually hostile framing and actions.²⁸ It also contributed to undermining the legitimacy of the KBJ leadership which at that time sought accommodation with the wider society and its power structures.

The existing evidence suggests that the KBJ leadership itself was apprehensive about the extremist views of some of the New Muslims, and went a long way to counter them. Thus, even before the creation of the ICKB, Mukozhev and Astemirov argued that violence in any form was against the Qur'an and *sunna*. Rather than being a matter of expediency, this approach was based on a general conception of the path to the *shari'a*-based society, which was, according to Mukozhev's vision before early 2000s, that 'neither we nor our children will live in the Islamic state. Its construction will take a very long time, as it requires that all Muslims come to understand and embrace *shari'a*'.²⁹

The KBJ leadership strongly opposed attempts by some New Muslims to establish militarized training-camps in the republic in 1998. In the follow-

²⁸ Shterin and Yarlykapov, 'Reconsidering Radicalisation and Terrorism'.

²⁹ Interview with Musa Mukozhev, conducted by Akhmet Yarlykapov, 19 February 2003.

ing year, addressing the escalating conflict in Dagestan, Astemirov issued a bulletin entitled 'The Hariji Mutiny and its Contemporary Manifestation', designed to explain the origins and dangers of religious fanaticism. These activities were supported by educational activities of the Islamic Institute, which included a special syllabus on countering extremism. In 2001, in response to both the dire socio-economic situation and growing persecution of the New Muslims by the republican law enforcement agencies, they appealed against the calls for the instant establishment of a *shari'a* republic in Kabardino-Balkaria.³⁰

It can be argued, therefore, that in Kabardino-Balkaria the presence of the strong, centralized, and authoritative *jamaat* helped to contain the more rebellious and militant factions of the Young Muslims—something that proved hard to achieve in other parts of the Northern Caucasus where similar structures were lacking. Before 2000 the KBJ leadership proved effective in securing law-abiding behaviour from the majority Young Muslims in resolving intergenerational conflicts, not least because their interpretation of the *shari'a*-based society emphasized the un-Islamic nature of intolerance and militancy.

However, more radical factions and militant jihadi groups within the entire Northern Caucasian region further weakened the authority of the KBJ leadership, and threatened to hijack its social basis. The armed conflicts and tensions served continuously to reinforce the view that armed *jihad* against the infidel was inevitable and mandatory. Astemirov and Mukozhev never felt in a position to fully disconnect themselves from the attempts of various jihadi networks to involve them in pan-Caucasian Islamist causes. The more impatient New Muslims formed breakaway groups, such as Jamaat Yarmuk, which completely denied legitimacy to both Russian and regional authorities, and eventually used this as a justification for violent actions.

Following their understanding of the Young Muslims as dangerous and externally controlled Wahhabis, local officials, in particular law enforcement agencies, engaged in virulent campaigns against them, which involved arrests on highly questionable grounds, refusal to register the Islamic Insti-

³⁰ Anzor Astemirov, 'Spravka o Rabote Islamskogo Tsentra Kabardino-Balkarii i Kabardino-Balkarskogo Instituta Islamskikh Issledovaniy po Protivostoyaniyu Sektantstvu i Religioznomu Fanatizmu', unpublished document, 2000 (a copy of this document is at the disposal of the current authors).

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

tute as a religious organization, confiscation of literature, and use of torture.³¹ In addition, in 2000, with the support of the official DUMKB, local authorities in the town of Chegem restricted public prayer time at the local 'new Muslim' mosque to Friday afternoons only, a regulation that was later extended to include all mosques in the republic. When a number of New Muslims refused to obey, local law-enforcement agencies responded with arrests, torture, and beatings and vandalism during raids in mosques. By 2005 the situation had become so intolerable that 400 of them appealed to President Putin to allow them to emigrate (to 'perform *hijra*') to a Muslim country. In the meantime, Mukozhev and Astemirov had been increasingly coming to the view that the republican authorities were firmly on the side of the infidel, and that violence against them was now both justifiable and necessary.³² In a dramatic turn, they joined the militant Jamaat Yarmuk, and in October 2005 participated in an armed raid on the republican capital Nal'chik, which was rebuffed by the Russian security agencies.

BATTLES FOR THE ISLAMIC STATE: MILITANT *JAMAAT* AND THE CAUCASIAN EMIRATE

The emergence of the Caucasian Emirate in 2007 was the result of complex developments that led to a confluence of different strands—embodied in groups, movements, and individuals—within North Caucasian Islam, converging on the idea that the establishment of a supra-ethnic Islamic polity was the culmination and ultimate justification of their protests and aspirations. Among other things, this involved a process of 'frame alignment' to arrive at shared conceptualizations of *shari'a*-based polities;³³ disbandment of previous secular ethno-nationalist groups, and some new Salafi movements whose radicalized participants found appeal in militant Islamist ideologies; the already existing smaller militarized *jamaats*, such as Jennet, Shariat, and Yarmuk; and the arrival of a new generation of Muslims whose young lives

³¹ Zhukov, *Kabardino-Balkaria*.

³² Ibid.

³³ The notion of frame alignment refers to a process whereby different social actors arrive at shared—or at least complementary—understandings and formulations of their positions in relation to particular social issues, and thus create an ideological basis for a social movement. See David Snow and Robert Benford, 'Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participant Mobilization', *International Social Movement Research*, 1 (1988), 197–217.

were shaped by the economic collapse, social turmoil and devastation brought about by two Russo-Chechen wars and militarized rebellions of the 1990s–early 2000s.³⁴ Also, as Alexander Knysh points out in his analysis of the Caucasian Emirate’s operation on the internet, this was the first state to emerge and, to a large extent continue, as a cyberspace polity.³⁵

Experts tend to agree that what can be termed the Chechen strand was the most influential among those that eventually conflated in the emirate.³⁶ After the years of struggling for an independent state, defeated by the Russian army in the Second Chechen War (1999–2000), and marginalized in their own homeland, some Chechen commanders came to see their cause in pan-Caucasian and pan-Islamic terms, thereby parting company with those, such as Aslan Maskhadov, President of the Republic of Ichkeria, who remained faithful to secular ethnic nationalism. In many ways the affinity with militant Islamism was prompted by an acute need to find new recruits from other ethnic groups, as the Chechen pool of potential recruits was steadily shrinking. Thus Shamil Basaev, himself a recent recruit to Islamism, was in the early 2000s targeting Nogai youth of the Stavropol region, which is predominantly Russian—and with some success: marginalized and disadvantaged, some young Nogais were willing to join ‘the *jihad*’ and be assigned to special ethnically based military units. At the same time, as we have shown earlier, the KBJ leaders were increasingly accepting the idea of forming an alliance with Chechen rebel leaders, provided that the latter abandoned their ethnic nationalism. In his long correspondence with Dokku Umarov, Anzor Astemirov persistently argued that Chechen nationalism, like any kind of ethnic nationalism, was un-Islamic as it perpetuated separation among Muslims.³⁷ Genuine liberation, he maintained, was only possible within a single united Islamic state, founded on and governed by *shari’a* law.

³⁴ On Shariat Jamaat see Ruslan Kurbanov, ‘The Information Jihad of “Shariat” Jamaat: Objectives, Methods, and Achievements’, in Roland Dannreuther and Luke March (eds), *Russia and Islam: State, Society and Radicalism*, London and New York: Routledge: 2010, 155–74.

³⁵ Alexander Knysh, ‘The Caucasus Emirate: Between Reality and Virtuality’ (2009), available at http://www.bcics.northwestern.edu/documents/.../Keyman_09-001_Knysh, accessed 15 August 2011.

³⁶ Ibid.; Kurbanov, ‘The Information Jihad’.

³⁷ On Dokku Umarov, one of the Chechen rebel leaders, see Knysh, ‘The Caucasus Emirate’.

On the twenty-fifth day of the month of Ramadan 1428 (31 October 2007) Dokku Umarov appeared on a video recording broadcast on the worldwide web. Sitting under the black banner of the *jihad*, floundering and muddling his way through apparently unfamiliar words, he declared that he and his brothers-in-arms had renounced the struggle for Chechen independence and were establishing the Caucasian Emirate ('Imarat Kavkaz') as part of the global *umma*. He rejected all laws, politico-administrative entities, and geographical names created by the 'Russian infidel', and declared 'restoration' of the Ottoman system of *vilayets* as properly suited to an Islamic state. Six new *vilayets* were stipulated—coinciding, curiously, with six major North Caucasian republics created by the Soviet government, and in addition those comprising predominantly Slavic regions of southern Russia. Moreover, the new Islamist project defied all existing geopolitical boundaries established by the 'infidel' and claimed jurisdiction over distant Russian territories, such as the Middle Volga area and Siberia, either currently populated by Muslims or previously 'lost to Islam'.³⁸

Pushed away from the physical space by the combined efforts of the Russian forces and local anti-Islamists, the '*emiratchiks*' grasped the opportunity to establish a virtual Islamic state, prompted by the pervasive proliferation of the internet in the 1990s–early 2000s. Attempting recruitment via the new virtual medium also provided an opportunity to compensate for the shrinking pool of potential jihadis on the ground.³⁹ Finally, using the internet they were now able to make exaggerated claims about their significance, as their virtual presence was disproportionate to their actual membership.

However, having declared the new polity in virtual space, and claiming authority over imagined Islamic lands, the leadership of the emirate made real attempts at state building, the most consistent of which was establishment of the *shari'a* court (*mahkama sharia*). Anzor Astemirov, who adopted the name Emir Sayfullah ('Sword of God'), became *qadi* or chief Islamic judge of the emirate, and was the main intellectual force behind attempts to create a system of *shari'a*-based institutions, before he was killed in March 2010 by Russian security forces. (One of his decisions was the issuing of a death *fatwa* against Akhmet Zakaev, the Ichkerian 'foreign minister in exile', who vehemently opposed pan-Islamism in general and the emirate in particular.)

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

The ‘*emiratchiks*’ have also made attempts to set up a financial system, making strenuous attempts at reconciling *shari’a* law and the reality of their situation, which has proved difficult and required a great deal of tweaking and twisting. In particular, in order to secure revenue they appealed to the concept of *zakat*, or Islamic charity, claiming that this can be interpreted as a mandatory tax *fi sabilillah* (‘Allah’s cause’), which, in their view, included support for the armed struggle and the emirate structures.⁴⁰ Under Astemirov’s judicial authority these demands were often supported by elaborate argumentation and references to Islamic scriptures and scholarship. However, the practical expression was letters sent to Muslim businessmen working in the Northern Caucasus and elsewhere in Russia, demanding 2.5 per cent of the value of their wealth as *zakat*, with threats of dire consequences for them and their relatives in case of non-compliance. This practice rapidly deteriorated even further after Astemirov’s death, when it became barely distinguishable from an ordinary racket by rogue individuals.

However, by far the most striking attempts to make the emirate’s presence known in the physical world have been terrorist activities associated with it, which have included the bombing in the Moscow Metro on 29 March 2010 and the terrorist act at Domodedovo International Airport on 24 January 2011, which killed dozens and wounded hundreds of civilians. Apart from causing human tragedies, these acts also displayed the familiar strategic logic of relatively small terrorist groups drawing public attention to their causes by committing dramatic atrocities.⁴¹

By and large, beyond the virtual reality the emirate operates mainly as a network of semi-autonomous terrorist cells, loosely connected via internet forums and mobile phone communication. Apart from the virtually constructed authority of particular individuals, such as Dokku Umarov, Anzor Astemirov and, at some point, Aslambek Vadalov (b. 1972), there is no evidence of centralized structures—political, military, or otherwise. Moreover, by the summer of 2010 the emirate had lost its more articulate leaders, which led to the virtual paralysis of its fledgling structures, such as the *shari’a* court. While the push factors, such as the continuing ‘anti-Wahhabi’

⁴⁰ Renat Bekkin, ‘Islamskaya Ekonomika: pravda i vymysly’ [Islamic Economics: truth and myths], 2010, available at <http://www.ia-centr.ru/expert/7226/>, accessed 2 September 2011.

⁴¹ See Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Robert Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, New York: Random House, 2005.

DEMYSTIFYING THE CALIPHATE

campaigns and the animosities between Dagestani Sufis and Salafis against the background of the economic and political instability, still help maintain some of the emirate's appeal to some young people, its social recruitment base remains at a low level.

The emirate's precarious nature is curiously evident in the ongoing internet debate about its official language. For all their hatred of what they call 'Rusnya', the *emiratchiks* cannot escape the fact that the Russian language *de facto* remains the *lingua franca* of diverse Muslim ethnic groups. While assuming that the language of the infidel must be replaced by an authentic Islamic language, they are torn over relative merits of Turkish (or Ottoman, in their parlance) and Arabic. For some 'Ottoman' was the official language of the last caliphate and, in addition, is similar to the languages of many Caucasian ethnic groups, such as the Azeri, Karachay-Balkar, Kumyk, and Nogai peoples. For others, however, the Qur'anic authenticity of the Arab language is the overriding merit, though this position is undermined by the fact in Northern Caucasian history Arabic was spoken only in scholarly discussions in Dagestan, and only before the late 1920s. In the meantime the debate is proceeding in Russian, with no signs of Arabic or Turkish language schools prevailing.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the context of the post-Soviet Northern Caucasus, various evocations of the vision of an ideal Islamic state have been grafted onto the aspirations of some young Muslims to reject what they saw as corrupt and constraining social relations and negotiate their entry into the modern world of individual choice, political participation, and economic entrepreneurialism. However, these visions have also been used to enhance and legitimize political projects and redefine ethnic and national boundaries. In this sense, political activists and rebels, primarily in Chechnya, have utilized the idea of the caliphate in their ideological shifts from secular ethnic nationalism to religious nationalism in the name of global Islam. Rather than being uniform and bounded, these were diverse projects that can only be understood in their concrete socio-political contexts. We could also observe that in certain circumstances the most radicalized factions within Islamist projects can converge and become bounded by the aim of establishing a caliphate-inspired polity through terrorist means. However, rather than assuming a direct and necessary link between groups motivated by these ideas and

political violence, we can arrive at more convincing explanations by paying more attention to the radicalizing dynamics of the interactions between these groups and wider social institutions, in which the inadequacies of these institutions and of their responses to Islamist critiques can be significant factors in themselves.

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INDEX

- ‘Abbasid Islamic Caliphate (750–1258): 6, 12, 26, 69–71, 117, 120, 148, 153; collapse of, 13; territory of, 137
- Abdal-Qadir, Shaykh: 238–42; background of, 239; online presence of, 245; *Return of the Khalifate*, 239; *The Muslim Prince*, 242
- Abna al-Rashid, al-Amin wa l-Ma'mun* (2006): 153–4
- ‘Abduh, Muhammad: 59, 83, 170; *Tafsir al-manar*, 92; writings of, 111
- Abdülhamid, Sultan: 14–15
- Abdülhamid II, Sultan: 26, 54, 129, 148, 151, 154, 157–8, 240; depiction of, 159–164; family of, 160; foreign policy of, 149; pan-Islamic policy, 96–7; reign of, 157, 161
- Abdumecit II: 34; abdication of, 43–5
- Abraham: 179
- Abu Bakr: 67
- Adil, Abu Usman: leader of IMU, 215
- Adolat: ideology of, 209; members of, 209–10; outlawing of (1992), 210
- al-Afghani, Jamal al-Din: 30, 83, 159
- Afghanistan: 76, 105, 222; borders of, 207, 210; insurgency activity in, 207, 221; Mujahideen, 210, 232; Operation Enduring Freedom, 126, 207, 212, 217; Pashtun population of, 212; Soviet Invasion of (1979–89), 29, 227–8, 231, 236
- Aga Khan: 42
- Ahmadi, Abdulfattoh: press secretary of IMU, 220
- Ahmed, Masood: founder of Jamaat-ul-Muslimeen, 229
- Akhtaev, Akhmad-Kadi: 252, 257, 260
- Akramiya: members of, 213
- al-Khilafa wa sultat al-umma*: influence of, 53; theories discussed in, 52
- al-Malik Farouq* (2008): 158
- al-Zahir Baybars*: 155–6, 164
- al-Qaeda: 127, 221
- Algeria: 226
- ‘Ali, Muhammad: family of, 121–2
- Ali, Amir: 42
- Ali, Maulana Muhammad: leader of Khilafat Committee, 220
- Ali, Maulana Shaukat: leader of Khilafat Committee, 220
- Ali, Mukta: Indonesian Minister of Religious Affairs, 168

INDEX

- All India Muslim League: United Provinces branch of, 65
- all-USSR Islamic Resistance Party (IRP): members of, 209
- Allah of Delhi, Shah Wali: 82; influence of, 59–60
- Amin, ‘Abd al-Salam: writer of *‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz*, 152
- Arkoun, Mohammed: 183
- al-Asad, Bashir: regime of, 242
- al-Asad, Hafez: family of, 155
- Asj’ari, Hasjim: family of, 166; founder of NU, 166
- Association of Muslim Studies (HMI): 165, 167; members of, 27
- Astemirov, Anzor: 264, 266, 269; advocate of Islamicized pan-Caucasianism, 255–6; co-founder of ICKB, 263; correspondence with Dokku Umarov, 267; death of (2010), 268; Emir Sayfullah, 268; ‘The Hariji Mutiny and its Contemporary Manifestation’, 265
- Atatürk, Mustafa Kemal: 15, 25, 31, 33–4, 36–7, 39–41, 43–4, 46, 54, 96, 98, 100–1, 106–7, 114, 221; arrival at Samsun (1919), 35; background of, 40–1; criticisms of, 103, 11–12; death of (1938), 107–8; family of, 99–100; ideology of, 25, 32, 40, 47, 52; leader of Society for the Defence of National Rights in Anatolia and Rumelia, 37; President of Turkey, 35, 38, 90; supporters of, 99, 103, 112–13
- Australia: 187
- Azad, Abu ‘l-Kalam: 63; *amir-i shari’at*, 61; leader of Khilafat Movement, 61, 84; writings of, 24
- al-‘Aziz, ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd: 148, 163
- al-‘Aziziyya, Muhammad: director of *al-Zahir Baybar*, 155
- Baasyir, Abu Bakar: exile of, 16; founder of Jamaah Islamiyah, 15–16
- al-Baghdadi, Abdurrahman: 187
- Bangladesh: 236; support for implementation of *shari’a* in, 226
- Bani Umayya: depiction of moral decay in, 163
- Bani ‘Uthman: depiction of moral decay in, 164
- al-Banna, Hasan: 137, 140, 144; criticisms of, 243; founder of Muslim Brotherhood, 127; writings of, 127, 195
- Basaev, Shamil: 258, 262; advocate of Islamicized pan-Caucasianism, 255–6
- Baso, Ahmad: criticisms of Nurcholish Madjid, 183
- Bayat: members of, 213
- Bele, Refet: 38, 43, 47
- Bellah, Robert: 183; ‘Islamic Tradition and the Problems of Modernization’, 175
- Bengal Khilafat Conference (1920): statements made at, 88
- Berger, Peter L.: 176–8
- Bey, Sabit: 39; Turkish Interior Minister, 39
- Bintang Hindia*: 100; articles in, 99, 102–4
- Blair, Tony: British Prime Minister, 4
- Bosnia-Herzegovina: 76
- Bosnians: 46
- Breining, Eric: memoirs of, 219
- Brunei: 12
- Bush, George W.: 4; administration of, 225
- caliph: honorific use of term, 9–10; Murabitun view of, 246; political institution of, 170

INDEX

- caliphate: 93, 135, 196, 198, 243, 261; IIP view of, 143; use of term, 3–4, 89–90, 92–3; western perception of, 5; *wilayat*, 4
- Cameron, David: British Prime Minister, 244
- Canada: 168
- Di Capua, Yoav: *Gatekeepers of the Arab Past*, 162
- Caucasian Emirate: 256, 263 emergence of (2007), 266, 268
- Caucasian War (1817–64): belligerents of, 16, 250–1
- Chechnya: 17, 249–51, 255, 260, 262, 270; First Chechen War (1994–6), 255, 267; Second Chechen War (1999–2000), 255, 267
- China: 13
- al-Chirkawi, Saud-Afandi: claim of authority over Dagestani Sufi *tariqats*, 259
- Christianity: 130, 135, 150, 162, 179, 213, 216; Greek Orthodox, 110; political, 112
- Congress of Ezurum (1919): result of, 35
- Congress of Sivas (1919): result of, 35
- Congress of the Muslim World (1926): 50–1, 86; focus of, 51
- Council of Grand Ulama: withdrawal of religious qualifications of ‘Ali ‘Abd al-Raziq, 6
- Council of Muslim Umma: 3
- Cox, Harvey: 169, 173–4; *Secular City*, 175
- Dagestan: 17, 249, 251–2, 255–6, 258, 262, 265, 270; corruption in, 253, 260; Derbent, 249–50; Invasion of (1999), 262–3; Kadar Zone, 260–1; Khasavyurt, 259; Sufi *tariqats*, 259
- Dahlan, Ahmad: Sahfi’I mufti of Mecca, 123
- dar al-Islam*: 26, 132, 159; concept of, 14
- Darmokondo*: articles in, 102
- Daryabadi, ‘Abd al-Majid: 65
- Davuduglu, Ahmet: Turkish Foreign Minister, 119
- Deobandism: 64–5, 75, 90, 230
- Dihlawi, Shah Wali Allah: 10–11
- Dudaev, Johar: 255
- al-Durr, Shajarat: 155
- Dutch East Indies: 15, 24–5, 95; *Vreemde Oosterlingen*, 14
- Durkheim, Emile: 173, 176
- Eastern Anatolia Society of the Defence of National Rights: 35
- Egypt: 36, 49–50, 55, 82, 105, 109, 120–1, 128, 136–7, 225; British occupation of (1822–1953), 8; Cairo, 6, 9, 14–15, 85, 122, 149, 151, 155, 157–8; Liberal-Constitutionalist Party, 53; Ministry of Culture, 152; parliamentary elections of (1994), 142–3; Revolution (2011–12), 8; support for implementation of *shari’a* in, 226
- Elliot, Henry: British Ambassador to Constantinople, 160
- Erdogan, Recep Tayyip: Turkish Prime Minister, 158
- al-Fahd, Nasir: 125, 133; background of, 125–6; concept of *mufakirun Islamiyyun*, 128; denunciation of Ottoman caliphate, 119, 129–30, 132; imprisonment of, 125; ‘The position of Shaykh Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab on the Ottoman state’, 126, 131; use of *al-dawla al-turkiyya*, 129; writings of, 118, 126

INDEX

- Faruqi, Ziya al-Rahman: 74–6
 Fatih, Mohammed: 212
 Fatimid Islamic Caliphate: 6
 Ferghana Valley: 208–9; population of, 209, 213
 Ferit, Damar: 35, 37
 Fethi (Okyar): 38; Speaker of the Assembly, 39
 Fevzi, Marshal (Çakmak): 39
 Fodio, ‘Uthman dan: 82
 First World War (1914–18): 15, 42, 46, 48, 55, 57, 85, 123, 136; belligerents of, 6, 32, 40, 45, 220; Gallipoli front of, 40; Treaty of Sèvres (1920), 85
 France: military of, 46; Paris, 45
 Fu‘ad I of Egypt, King: 15, 48–50, 54, 86
 Fuat, General Ali (Cebeşoy): 38, 43, 47
- Gaddafi, Muammar: 242
 Gagavuz: 46
 Gellner, Ernest: 183
 Germany: 18, 159, 232, 236; Cologne, 236; Turkish diaspora in, 233
 globalization: impact on Islamic community, 24
 al-Guini, Yusri: 157
- al-Habib, Shaykh Muhammad ibn: followers of, 238
 Habibur-Rahman, Maulana: 99
 Hamas: 215
 Hanifa, Abu: 71; founder of Hanafi school of law, 70
 al-Haq, General Zia: regime of, 75
 ibn Hasan, Shaykh ‘abd al-Latif: 131
 Hashemites: 122–3; supporters of, 49
 al-Hashimi, Faysal ibn al-Husayn (King Faysal I): coronation of (1921), 136; family of, 49, 136
 al-Hashimi, Sayyid Husayn ibn ‘Ali: family of, 136; former Sharif of Mecca, 86
 Hasjim, Wahid: Indonesian Minister of Religious Affairs, 166
 Hassan, Ahmad: 109; *Islam and Nationalism*, 111; leader of Persatuan Islam, 105
 Hassan, Muhammad Kamal: 173
 Helmi, Alfian Yoeoef: contributor to *Pandji Islam*, 107; Indonesian Ambassador to Turkey, 107
 Hijaz: 6, 14, 49–51, 86–7, 102, 118, 121, 123, 136; occupied by Saudis (1925), 15, 123; Wahhabi view of, 122, 124
 Hilafet Devleti: 236; founding of (1983), 232
 Hinduism: 89
 Hizb al-Tahrir: 7, 9, 18–19, 54, 128, 204; banning of, 8, 18; founding of (1953), 54, 132; ideology of, 2, 20–1; members of, 4, 30; supporters of, 127, 134
 Hizb ut-Tahrir: 27, 188, 190, 198, 202, 204, 215, 221, 223, 235; District Executive Committee (DPD), 189; *halaqah*, 194; ideology of, 2, 185–7, 189, 194–5, 198, 202–3, 222; members of, 186–7, 190–202, 221–3; Muslimah Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (MHTI), 189; Provincial Executive Committee (DPP), 189
 Hizbollah: 215
 Hodgson, Marshall: 175, 183
 Husayn, Abdullah: Amir of Trans-Jordan, 49; family of, 6–7, 48
 Husayn, Faysal: family of, 6–7
 Husayn of Mecca, Sharif: 7, 54, 124; family of, 6–7; military campaigns of, 123; self-declaration as ‘King of the Arabs’ (1916), 6

INDEX

- Husayn of the Hijaz, King: 48
- Hussein, Saddam: 141
- ijma*: 59
- ijtihad*: 59, 195, 229–30; concept of, 58; discussions of, 245
- India: 9, 11, 36, 54, 86, 88, 93; All India Muslim Personal Law Board, 65; Awadh, 81; Bihar, 61–2, 64; British Raj, 93, 95, 220; Calcutta, 87; Deccani Awrangabad, 90; Delhi, 82; Gujarat, 13; Hyderabad, 81; Indian National Congress, 64; Muslim population of, 11, 24, 58, 61–2, 64, 220–1; New Delhi, 23; Orissa, 62; Partition (1947), 24, 57; Student Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), 58
- Indonesia: 12, 25–6, 28, 95–6, 114, 180–2, 185–6, 188–9, 195, 203, 226, 237; Bogor, 187; Council of Muslim Scholars, 184; East Java, 195; Flores, 109; health system of, 197; Islamic State Institute (IAIN), 167–8; Jakarta (Batavia), 4–5, 15, 22–3, 96, 167, 189, 202; Malang, 194; Masyumi Party, 27, 166–8; Muslim population of, 99, 168; Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), 166, 168, 183; National Library of Indonesia (PNRI), 114; Ponogoro, 166; Revolutionary Government of Republic of Indonesia (PRRI), 27; Sumatra, 109; Surabaya, 97; Yogyakarta, 27, 186, 189–93, 197, 201–2; Youth Pledge, 192
- Indonesian Islamic Student Congress (KMII): first congress (2009), 192–3; members of, 192
- International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations: 167
- International Monetary Fund (IMF): 202
- Iqbal, Muhammad: 74, 170–1; correspondence with Sayyid Sulayman Nadwi, 59–60; lectures of, 58
- Iran: 110, 137, 216; Islamic Revolution (1979), 75
- Iraq: 6, 25, 86, 109, 122, 125, 136, 138, 142–3; 14 July Revolution (1958), 139; al-Nahda, 137; al-Watani, 137; Baghdad, 5–6, 9, 13, 21, 26, 131, 155–6, 158; British Mandate of (1920–32), 137; Invasion of Kuwait (1990), 139; Kurdish population of, 142; Operation Iraqi Freedom (2003–11), 126, 143
- Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP): *Dar al-Salam*, 141–2; ideology of, 140; manifesto of, 139–41; wing of Muslim Brotherhood, 26, 139–40; ‘Political Change in Iraq’, 141; view of ‘caliphate’ concept, 143
- Iraqi Muslim Brotherhood: 135–6; branches of, 141, 143–4; ideology of, 137–8, 144; members of, 137–9, 141, 143
- Ishtiaq, Mohammad: leader of Jamaat-ul-Muslimeen, 229
- Islam: 1–2, 6, 11, 13, 16, 24, 52–3, 58–9, 64, 70, 85, 105–6, 110–12, 121–2, 125, 131, 135, 151, 159, 164, 166, 175, 178–9, 181–2, 195–6, 200–1, 208, 215, 228–30, 238, 240, 244–5, 256, 270; conversion to, 12–13, 219, 237; *hajj*, 124; Hanafi school of law, 70; Isma’ili, 42; political, 95, 112, 136–7; Qur’an, 11, 27, 62, 64, 66, 68, 72, 74, 76, 82, 88–9, 91, 94, 104, 108, 110, 149, 152–3, 159, 168, 170, 174–5, 178, 180, 193, 195, 198, 208, 219, 229–31, 241, 245, 264; Ramadan, 104, 148, 157; *shari’a*, 2–3, 5, 7, 17, 23, 26, 28–9, 51–3,

INDEX

- 61, 65, 76, 99, 125, 138, 140,
185, 203–4, 209, 216, 225–6, 234,
250, 257–8, 260, 262–5, 267–9;
Shi'a, 42, 73, 75, 128, 136–7, 142;
Sunni, 4, 60, 66, 74, 76, 78, 119,
159, 162, 226, 228–9, 246, 248;
umma, 3, 12, 17, 23, 29, 93, 111,
128, 134, 137, 144, 149, 218–20,
232, 237, 245, 248, 268; *zakat*,
269; Zaydi, 128
- Islamic Centre of Kabardino-Balkaria
(ICKB): members of, 263
- Islamic Jihad Union (IJU): 207, 212;
members of, 219; suicide bombing
campaigns of, 213
- Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
(IMU): 27, 207, 216–22; affiliates
of, 214; alleged role in Tashkent
bombing (1999), 210–11; ideology
of, 208, 217; insurgency activity of,
208, 216–17; members of, 207–8,
213, 215, 218, 220, 222–3; pres-
ence in Tajikistan, 211; recognised
as terrorist organization by US
Department of State (2000), 212
- Islamism: 2–3, 7, 90, 119, 134–5,
151, 209, 267; militant, 152;
Sunni, 144; view of Ottoman
caliphate, 127–8
- Islamism-socialism: 100
- Israel: 158, 217; conflict with Pales-
tine, 8; Independence of (1948), 8;
- al-Jabarti, 'abd al-Rahman: 82
- al-Jabiri, Muhammad 'Abid: 183
- jahiliyya*: 111, 120; concept of, 8
- Jama'a, Ibn: 120
- Jamaah Islamiyah: members of, 15–16
- Jamaat Jennet: 266
- Jamaat Shariat: 263, 266
- Jamaat Yarmuk: 265–6
- Jama'at-I Islami: 54, 58
- Jama'a-tul-Muslimeen: 229, 231–3;
members of, 28–9, 227, 229,
235–6; presence in UK, 230
- Jamal al-Din al-Afghani* (1980):
157–8
- Jam'iyyat al-'Ulama-i Hind: 64–5;
members of, 90
- Japan: government of, 211
- 'Jawhar', Muhammad 'Ali: 84, 91;
background of, 84–5; *Comrade*,
85; family of, 86; *Hamdard*, 85;
ideology of, 85; use of 'caliphate'
concept, 93; writings of, 24
- Jerusalem, 23, 50–1, 204; al-Aqsa
mosque, 55
- Jerusalem General Islamic Congress
(1931): 50–1
- jihad*: 4, 11, 64, 120–1, 234, 239,
250; anti-Russian, 258; armed,
265; global, 208, 221; online activ-
ity, 125; writings on, 118, 126
- Jihad Union: 27
- Johns, Anthony: concept of 'single
big-bang theory', 13
- Judaism: 89, 179, 216
- Junaidi, Ahmad: 187
- Kabardino-Balkaria: 249, 251–2, 255,
265; Chegem, 266; corruption in,
253; *jamaats* in, 263–5; Nal'chik,
266
- Kabardino-Balkaria Jamaat (KBJ):
263; ideology of, 264; members of,
264–5, 267
- Kadyrov, Ramzan: 256
- 'I-Kalam, Abu ('Azad'): background
of, 87; ideology of, 87–91; use of
'caliphate' concept, 89–90
- Kaplin, Camaledin: family of, 233;
founder of Hilafet Devleti, 232
- Kaplin, Metin: family of, 233; impris-
onment of, 233

INDEX

- Karabekir, Kazim: 38, 44, 47
- Karamanlis: 46
- Karimov, Islam: 210, 212; regime of, 207, 209, 213, 215
- Kartosuwiryo, S.M.: 15
- Kashmir: 76
- al-Kawakibi, 'Abd al-Rahman: 158–9; exile of, 149; *Umm al-qura*, 149
- Kebedov, Bagauddin: 252, 257–8; followers of, 261; ideology of, 261
- Kemalism: 105, 111–12, 114; concept of, 101, 102
- Khaldun, Ibn: *Muqaddima*, 92
- al-Khaliq, 'Abd al-Rahman: 132
- Kharijites: 126–7, 133; influence of, 128
- al-Khaththath, Muhammad: 187
- al-Khattab, Ibn: background of, 262
- al-Khattab, 'Umar b.: second successor to Prophet Muhammad, 59
- Khomeini, Ayatollah Ruhollah: 75
- Khilafat Movement (All-India Khilafat Committee) (1919–24): 9, 61, 63–4, 84–5, 93, 95; collapse of, 11, 24, 84, 91; founding of, 220–1; ideology of, 57; influence of, 90, 94; Khilafat Manifesto (1920), 221; members of, 11; support for Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, 99
- khuruj*: concept of, 119–20; punishment for, 119
- Kingdom of Jordan: 6, 8, 228; Amman, 9; support for implementation of *shari'a* in, 226
- kufr*: 125; concept of, 120; pejorative use of term, 129
- Kurdistan: 48
- Kuwait: Iraqi Invasion of (1990), 139
- Kyrgyzstan: 27, 207–8, 211, 213
- Lawrence, T.E.: forces led by, 123
- Lebanon: 4
- bin Laden, Usama: assassination of (2011), 30
- Libya: Italian Invasion of (1911), 40
- Madjid, Nurcholish (Cak Nur): 165–6, 168–70, 172–3, 176–7, 180, 184; 'A Few Notes on the Issue of the Renewal of Thought in Islam', 174; background of, 166, 178; chairman of HMI, 27; conceptualization of secularity, 170–1; criticisms of, 173–4, 183; *Islam: Doctrine and Civilization: A Critical Analysis of the Problem of Faith, Humanity and Modernity* (1992), 178–9; *Islam Kemodernan dan Keindonesiaan*, 181; 'Modernization is Rationalization not Westernization' (1968), 171; 'Reinvigorating Religious Understanding in the Indonesian Muslim Community' (1972), 169; 'Secularisation Reconsidered', 174; 'The Necessity of Renewing Islamic Thought and the Problem of the Integration of the Ummat' (1970), 167, 169; use of 'Covenant of Medina', 176, 180, 183
- ibn Mahan, 'Ali: governor of Khurasan, 153–4
- Mahmut II, Sultan: 239
- al-Majari, Shawqi: director of *Abna al-Rashid, al-Amin wa l-Ma'mun*, 153
- Malaysia: 12, 16, 237
- Malik, Imam: 239, 244
- Mamluk: 148, 156
- al-Maraghi, Shaykh Muhammad Mustafa: Grand Shaykh of al-Azhar, 51
- al-Masari, Muhammad: 132–3; exile of, 132
- Maskhadov, Aslan: President of Republic of Ichkeria, 267

INDEX

- Mawdudi, Sayyid Abu 'l-A'la: 61, 65, 67, 70–1, 94; background of, 90; criticisms of, 77; ideology of, 90–2; use of 'caliphate' concept, 92; writings of, 24, 68–72
- Medan Moeslimin*: articles in, 102; editorial staff of, 100
- Mehsud, Baitullah: death of (2009), 218; leader of Tehrik-i Taliban Pakistan, 218
- Mexico: 237–8
- Midgal, Joel: concept of 'state in society', 254–5
- Milli Gorus: members of, 232
- Misbach, Hadji: editor of *Medan Moeslimin*, 100
- Morocco: 8, 225
- Mozambique: 226
- Mu'awiya: 73, 78; criticisms of, 69, 77
- Mubarak, Hosni: 242; removed from power (2011), 8
- Mughal Empire: 9–10
- Muhammad, Prophet: 24, 35, 60, 72, 74, 76, 106, 179, 220, 228, 233, 248; Companions of, 59, 68–9, 73, 77; descendants of, 6, 136; *hadith* of, 152, 173; successors of, 67; *sunna* of, 91, 153, 195, 229, 231, 245, 258, 264
- Mukozhev, Musa: 264, 266; co-founder of ICKB, 263
- Murabitun: 242; ideology of, 239, 245; members of, 28, 227, 237, 240–1, 243; view of concept of 'caliph', 246
- Muslim Brotherhood: 26, 53, 128, 144–5, 246; branches of, 8, 26, 128, 136–7, 139–42, 144; criticisms of, 243; founding of (1927), 8, 127, 132; ideology of, 127–8; members of, 137–8; political activity of, 142–3; repression of, 139
- Muslim Students' Association: Assembly of the Savers of the Organization (HMI-MPO), 201–2
- Muslim World League (MWL): 3, 56; founding of (1955), 55
- al-Musta'sim: 156–7; depiction of, 156
- al-Nabhani, Taqi al-Din: founder of Hizb al-Tahrir, 8, 54, 221; writings of, 190
- Nadwat al-'Ulama: 60
- Nadwi, Ishaq: 66, 73–4
- Nadwi, Sayyid Sulayman: correspondence with Muhammad Iqbal, 59–60
- Nahdlatul Ulama: 15
- Najibullah, Mohammad: regime of, 231
- Namangani, Juma: background of, 209; co-founder of Adolat, 209; death of (2001), 207, 212; leader of IMU, 207–8
- Nasif, Shaykh Abdullah: 123
- nationalism: 17, 36, 38, 41, 86, 96, 101, 105, 110–111, 137–8, 157; Anatolian, 34; Arab, 9, 140, 151; Chechen, 256; ethnic, 267; Islamic, 98; Kurdish, 142; militant, 258; secular, 17; secular ethnic, 255; Turkish, 32, 34, 40, 46–7
- Natsir, Muhammad: 109, 173; co-founder of International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations, 167; criticisms of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, 111; head of Union of South-East Asian Islamic Students, 167; leader of Masyumi Party, 27; writings of, 109
- Nawaz, Haqq: founder of Sipah-i Sahaba, 75
- Nazim, Shaykh: 243

INDEX

- Neo-Caliphatism: 208, 221, 223
- Netherlands: Amsterdam, 101
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO): 208
- bin Nuh, Abdullah: 187
- Nu'mani, Muhammad Shibli: 83;
founder of Nadwat al-'Ulama, 60
- Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC): 56; founding of (1969), 55
- Orientalism: 53, 242
- Ottoman Caliphate: 11, 42, 88,
96, 109, 121–3, 126, 132, 148;
abolition of (1924), 1, 5, 7, 9, 15,
22–3, 25, 31–2, 51–2, 57, 98, 102,
134, 149, 221; denunciations of,
118–19, 129–30; Islamist view of,
127–8; Wahhabi view of, 117, 125,
128, 132
- Ottoman Empire: 7, 16, 21, 81, 96,
103, 111–12, 122, 133, 138, 147,
157, 159, 220, 227, 240, 270;
Archives of the Ottoman Prime
Minister's Office, 10; Awqaf, 45;
capture of Cairo (1517), 14, 85;
constitution of (1876), 148–9; gov-
ernment of, 49; Istanbul, 130, 136;
military of, 34, 40–1, 54, 99, 123,
137; *millet* system of, 161; Ministry
of Religious Affairs, 45; Mosul
Province, 37; naval alliance with
Sultanate of Aceh, 14; Sublime
Porte, 10, 14, 33; territory of, 6,
45, 124, 148–9, 250; Tulip Period,
81; Wahhabi view of, 117
- Pakistan: 54, 58, 67, 168, 222, 225,
229, 236; borders of, 207; economy
of, 75; IMU activity in, 221;
Independence of (1947), 24, 57;
Jhang, 75; Karachi, 228–9, 236;
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, 76;
military of, 208, 214, 218; Muslim
population of, 24; support for
implementation of *shari'a* in, 226;
Waziristan, 214–15
- Palestine: 4, 30, 76, 109, 162, 212,
217, 244; conflict with Israel, 8;
Gaza, 8
- pan-Caucasianism: Islamicized, 255
- pan-Islamism: 15, 46, 243, 268;
development of, 97–8
- pan-Turkism: 46
- Pandji Islam*: contributors to, 107;
debate within, 108
- Paramadina Foundation: Klub Kajian
Agama (KAA), 181
- Pasha, Enver: commander of Otto-
man army, 34
- Pasha, Ibrahim: defeat of Wahabi
rebellion, 122; family of, 121
- Pasha, Ismet: founder of Progres-
sive Republican Party, 47; Turkish
Prime Minister, 39, 42, 44
- Pasha, Midhat: 151, 160
- Pasha, Tusun: family of, 121–2
- Penerangan Islam*: criticisms of Mus-
tafa Kemal Atatürk, 103
- People's Party: 39, 44–5; members
of, 47
- Persatuan Islam: members of, 105
- Persia: 13
- Persian Gulf War (First Gulf War)
(1990–1): 228; Invasion of Kuwait
(1990), 139
- Philippines: 12
- Pomaks: 46
- Progressive Republican Party: forma-
tion of (1924), 47; ideology of, 48;
members of, 47
- Putin, Vladimir: President of Russian
Federation, 266
- Qutb, Sayyid: 8; use of *jahiliyya* con-
cept, 120; writings of, 195

INDEX

- Qutuz, Sultan: death of, 155–6
- Raduyev, Salman: 258
- Rahmani, ‘Abd al-Samad: 64–5; ‘The Problem of the Emirate’, 62–3
- Rahman, Fazlur: 174
- Rahmani, Minnat Allah: 62
- al-Rashid, Harun: 71, 163; family of, 148, 153–4
- Rashidun: 24, 67–71, 73–4, 78; first, 72; principles of, 76–7; romanticism of, 71–2
- Rasjidi, Mohammed: criticisms of Nurcholish Madjid, 173–4
- Rauf, Husayn (Orbay): 39, 43; Turkish Prime Minister, 38–9; vice-president of GNA, 39
- al-Raziq, ‘Ali ‘Abd: 53–4, 169; background of, 53; religious qualifications withdrawn by Council of Grand Ulama, 6; writings of, 6
- Republic of Ichkeria: 256
- Rida, Muhammad Rashid: 59, 158; *Tafsir al-manar*, 92; writings of, 111
- Rida, Sayyid Muhammad Rashid: writings of, 51–2
- al-Rifaa’e, Dr Mohammad: 230, 234, 246; background of, 228; leader of Jama’a-tul-Muslimeen, 28–9, 227; supporters of, 232
- Rightly Guided Caliphs (Rashidun): 24, 26, 67, 117, 138, 148
- Romania: territory of, 46
- Russian Empire: 161; Civil War (1917–22), 251; military of, 40, 267; October Revolution (1917), 251–2
- Russian Federation: 16, 237–8, 254, 262, 268–9; Adygeya, 252; Domodedovo International Airport attack (2011), 269; Ingushetia, 252; Karachaevo-Cherkessia, 252; Kremlin, 256; military of, 263; Moscow, 5, 255; Moscow Metro bombing (2010), 269; North Ossetia, 252; Stavropol, 267
- Sabri, Shaykh Mustafa: last *shaykh al-islam* of Ottoman Empire, 52
- Sait of Palu, Shaykh: rebellion led by (1925), 48
- Saladin: 155
- Salafism: 7, 17, 229, 236, 245, 259; intellectual variants of, 257; jihad, 219; radical, 258, 261
- Salim, Hadji Agoes: 108
- Sarekat Islam: 100; *Doenia Islam*, 99, 103; *Fadjar Asia*, 103, 105; ideology of, 97–8; *Oetoesan Hindia*, 99, 103
- ibn Sa’ud, ‘Abd al-‘Aziz: 7, 15, 51, 106; founder of Saudi Arabia, 122; military forces of, 124–5; support for Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab, 130; supporters of, 85–6
- ibn Sa’ud, Abudllah: defeat of, 122
- Saudi Arabia: 25, 109, 119–20, 122, 133, 208, 242; Jedda, 49, 55, 124; Mecca, 6–7, 50, 54–5, 86–7, 118, 122, 124; Medina, 6, 21, 89, 118, 124, 153; Riyadh, 9, 26, 122–3
- al-Sawaf, Shaykh Muhammad Mahmud: founder of Iraqi Muslim Brotherhood, 137–8; memoirs of, 137; return to Iraq (1947), 137
- Second Balkan War (1913): 38
- Second World War (1939–45): 149, 221, 223, 252
- Shamil, Imam: 17, 251; self-declaration as *amir al-mu’minin*, 250
- al-Shaykh, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Rahman: 131
- al-Shinawi, ‘Abd al-‘Aziz: 129

INDEX

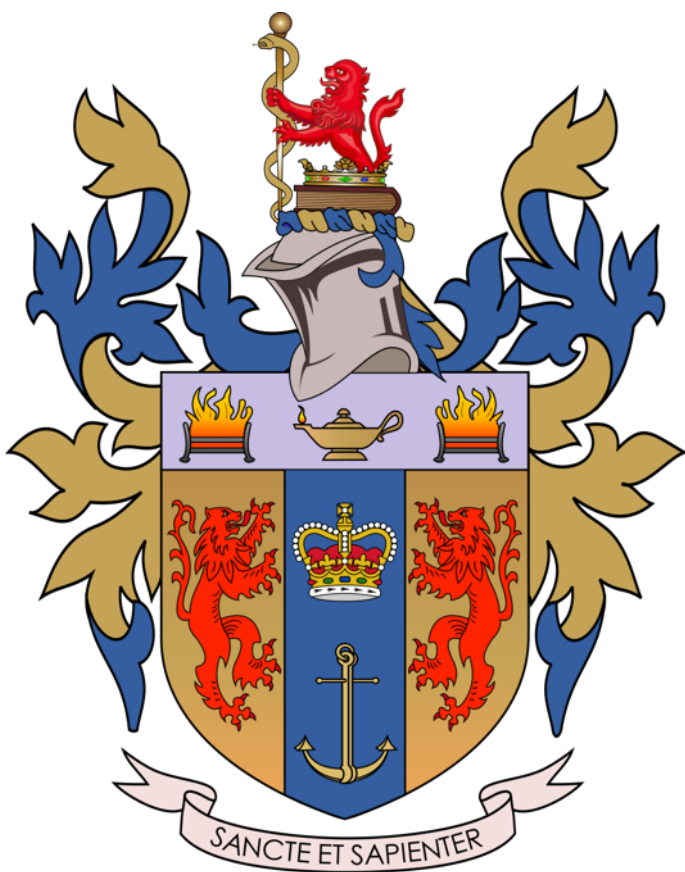
- shura*: concept of, 51
- Singapore: 14; Turkish consul in, 96
- Sipah-i Sahaba: 74–5, 77–8; banning of (2002), 76; founding of (1985), 75
- Society for the Defence of National Rights in Anatolia and Rumelia: members of, 37
- Soetomo: 107–8; background of, 100
- Sohail, Mansur: 212
- South Africa: 237; Cape Town, 239
- Soviet Union (USSR): 46, 220, 247, 251, 256; collapse of (1991), 17, 208; Invasion of (1979–89), 29, 227–8, 231, 236; nationality policy, 251–2
- Spain: Cordoba, 21, 238; Granada, 238
- Spiritual Board of Muslims of Kabardino-Balkaria (DUMKB): 264, 266
- Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Northern Caucasus: state control of, 252
- Stepashin, Sergei: Russian Interior Minister, 262
- Students' Liberation Movement: founding of (2001), 202
- Subhani, Azad: 65
- Sudan: 4
- as-Sufi, Abdul-Qadir (Ian Dallas): background of, 29, 238; leader of Murabitun, 28, 227, 237
- Sufism: 125, 128–9, 158, 180, 246, 258; brotherhoods of, 252, 259; denunciation of, 129; growth of, 129; ideology of, 127
- Suharto: 181–2; New Order regime, 114, 168, 182; removed from power (1998), 183, 188
- Sukarno: 104–6, 109, 111, 114, 168; dissolution of Masyumi Party (1960), 27; President of Indonesia, 15, 25, 27; support for Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, 112–13
- Suleiman, Khaled: 161
- Sultanate of Aceh: 14, 96; naval alliance with Ottoman Empire, 14
- Sultanate of Jambi: 96
- Sungkar, Abdullah: exile of, 16; founder of Jamaah Islamiyah, 16
- Suqut al-khilafa* (2010): 157, 159–61, 164
- Switzerland: Lausanne, 45
- Syria: 25, 46, 109, 155; Damascus, 6, 9, 21, 156–8
- Tadjuddin, Shaykh: followers of, 259
- al-Tahtwai, Rifa'a: 82
- Tajikistan: 27, 208, 211; government of, 210; IMU presence in, 211; Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan (IRPT), 210
- Taliban: 4, 212, 215, 217, 223, 232
- tawhid*: 169; concept of, 129; violations of, 169, 171
- Taymiyya, Ibn: 120, 183
- Tehrik-i Taliban Pakistan: members of, 218
- Thailand: 12
- The Political System of Islam* (1940): 65; contents of, 66
- Tipu Sultan of Mysore: death of (1799), 10; family of, 10
- Trans-Jordan: 6, 49, 125
- Treaty of Lausanne (1923): signing of, 38
- Turkey: 52, 91, 104–5, 108–9, 111, 113, 119, 208; Ankara, 33, 35, 37, 40–2; Bursa, 47; Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), 34, 36, 40; government of, 8, 33, 41–5, 53, 106; Grand National Assembly (GNA), 7, 31–9, 42, 44–5, 47, 51,

INDEX

- 58–60, 90; Istanbul, 5, 7, 21, 33–5, 37, 40, 43, 48, 54–5, 107, 122; Izmir, 43–4; Justice and Development Party (AKP), 8, 144, 158; Law of Fundamental Organization (1921), 36; Muslim population of, 32; Samsun, 35, 40; Taşkilat-I Mahsusa, 34
- Udugov, Movladi: advocate of Islamized pan-Caucasianism, 255–6
- ‘Umar: 67
- ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz* (1995): 152
- ‘Umar II: 69
- Umarov, Dokku: 268–9; correspondence with Anzor Astemirov, 267
- Umayyad Islamic Caliphate (661–750): 6, 12, 26, 69, 71, 117, 120, 148
- Ukraine: 4
- Union of South-East Asian Islamic Students: members of, 167
- United Arab Emirates (UAE): Dubai, 244
- United Kingdom (UK): 18, 29, 98, 141–2, 160, 227–8, 238, 245–6; Conservative Party, 244; government of, 233; London, 4–5, 132, 221, 236; military of, 46, 136; Muslim population of, 233–4; presence of Jama‘a-tul-Muslimeen in, 230; Respect Party, 233
- United States of America (USA): 77, 171, 215–16, 237, 240; 9/11 attacks, 121, 125, 133, 214, 235; Department of Homeland Security, 225; Department of State, 212; Republican Party, 225
- United Tajik Opposition (UTO): bases of, 210; members of, 210
- ‘Uthman: 67, 73; criticisms of, 69, 77
- Uzbekistan: 207–8, 213, 215; military of, 211; Muslim population of, 216–17; Namangan, 209; Surkhandar’inskaya Oblast, 211; Tashkent, 210, 213
- Vadalov, Aslambek: 269
- Vadillo, Umar: ideology of Murabitun, 240–1
- Vahdettin, Mehmet V: 34, 36
- al-Wahhab, Muhammad ibn ‘Abd: 82; founder of Wahhabism, 117, 130; supporters of, 130
- Wahhabism: 109, 117–18, 121–2, 127, 131, 133, 245, 260; denunciation of Sufism and Shi‘ism, 129; destruction of Deriyya (1818), 121–2, 130; suppression of, 121, 125; *‘ulama*, 117, 131, 133; view of Hijaz, 124; view of Ottoman caliphate, 117, 125, 128, 132; writings of, 123, 125
- Wahid, Abdul: Director in London of Hizb al-Tahrir, 4, 30
- Wahid, Abdurrahman (Gus Dur): 166
- Weber, Max: 173, 176
- Wilhelm II, Kaiser: 159
- World Bank: 202
- World Islamic Mint: 237
- World Trade Organization: 202
- Yahya, Abu: 212
- Yemen: 4, 226
- Young Turks: 161–3
- Yuldashev, Akram: 217–18; founder of Akramiya, 213
- Yuldoshev, Tohir: 214; background of, 209; co-founder of Adolat, 209; death of, 215; leader of IMU, 207–8

INDEX

- Yusanto, Ismail: 187, 190, 195
- Yusuf, Abu: *Kitab al-kharaj*, 71; student of Abu Hanifa, 70–1
- Zaidan, Abdul Karim: General Guide of Iraqi Muslim Brotherhood, 138
- Zakaev, Akhmet: death *fatwa* issued against, 268
- Zakariyya, Ghassan: 155; writer of *Abna al-Rashid, al-Amin wa l-Ma'mun*, 153; writer of *al-Zahir Baybar*, 155
- Zayd, Nasr Hamid Abu: 183
- Zaydan, Jurji: 150–1, 153, 155, 162–3; *al-'Abbasa ukht al-Rashid*, 154; background of, 150; founder of *al-Hilal*, 150; *Tā'rikh al-tamad-dun al-islami*, 150



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HURST & COMPANY, LONDON
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ISBN 978-1-84904-228-4



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